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IMPERIAL GERMANY

OPINIONS ON "IMPERIAL GERMANY."

COUNT MOLTKE :—"I have read this study on Germany with the greatest interest.

"There can be no doubt that every State requires a government suited to its individual idiosyncrasies. A Constitution like that of England—secure through her geographical position—a Constitution gradually developed out of the character of the nation—could never be transferred to the continent of Europe.

"France—during the last century—has tried alternately monarchy in various forms, empire and republic—without arriving at any definite result.

"Germany, on the other hand, only so recently united as an empire, is an intruder, a *parvenu*, in the family of European States. Hemmed in between mighty neighbours, we are of opinion that we require a strong monarchy. It was therefore a great pleasure for me to find that full justice had been done to the ancient and proven paternal government of the Hohenzollern."

PRINCE BISMARCK :—"I consider the different chapters of this book masterly."

PROFESSOR BLACKIE :—"I class this work with Aristotle's 'Politics' and Bryce's 'America,' as one of the three best books on the concrete philosophy of politics that I know. No better work could be placed into the hands of our modern false prophets of liberty and irreverence than the chapters on the Prussian monarchy. And yet, though the author's main business is to exhibit excellence, he is always just, and never attempts to veil the faults or to deny the dangers that belong to any form of social organization."

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH :—"I hope it is not presumptuous in a stranger to express to you the pleasure with which he has read your 'Imperial Germany,' especially that part of it in which you do justice to Bismarck."

IMPERIAL GERMANY

A CRITICAL STUDY

OF .

FACT AND CHARACTER

BY

SIDNEY WHITMAN

Greift nur hinein ins volle Menschenleben !
Ein jeder lebt's, nicht vielen ist's bekannt,
Und wo Ihr's packt, da ist's interessant.

GOETHE.

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1891

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DEDICATED
TO
PRINCE BISMARCK

2015206

P R E F A C E.

IT has not been my aim in this book on "Imperial Germany" to dwell on the material aspects of German life, except indirectly and when they are the cause or result of something deeper. This I have endeavoured to present without bias with its advantages and its drawbacks—viz., the general character, ethical and æsthetical, of the great people to whom we are allied by ties of blood as well as by tradition. I have not attempted to write an all-round book on Germany, such as Mr. Escott's comprehensive work on England, but I have examined some of the leading characteristics of Germany and its people, observed by myself during a long residence in the country. If I only succeed in inspiring a few of my readers with an increased interest in the great Teutonic nation, whose power in our day is one of the safest guarantees of European peace, I shall not have laboured in vain. Some of my conclusions may at first sight appear contradictory, but on a topic like the present one much, of course, depends upon the standpoint you take in viewing it. It has been my aim to speak the truth fearlessly.

SIDNEY WHITMAN.

LONDON, *May 1891.*

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

On its first appearance this book met with unusually favourable criticism both abroad and in England. It went through a large library edition, was translated into German and French, and has also lately been included in Baron Tauchnitz's Continental Collection of British Authors. It was acknowledged to be the standard book on the German Empire of 1871 by its own two great makers, and it was welcomed everywhere as a work of most exceptional insight and penetration, showing alike the merits and demerits, the power and the foibles, of our mighty neighbours and kinsmen over the Channel.

The Publisher therefore offers a popular edition with some confidence to the large class of Englishmen to whom the earlier issue was inaccessible, and who yet have an intelligent desire to know what is best worth knowing of the great German nation.

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IMPERIAL GERMANY.

CHAPTER I.

THE GERMAN CHARACTER IN POLITICS.

Nie war gegen das Ausland
Ein anderes Land gerecht wie Du;
Sei nicht allzu gerecht! Sie denken nicht edel genug,
Zu sehn, wie schön Dein Fehler ist.*

KLOPSTOCK.

I.

EIGHTEEN centuries ago Tacitus exclaimed, "May the Germans, as they cannot love us, at least retain their hatred of each other, so that, when Rome begins to totter, she may at least find support in the discord of that race."

On March 23, 1887, Bismarck said in the Prussian Herrenhaus (House of Lords), "The German lives by quarrelling with his countrymen."

The opinion held by the Roman historian, coinciding almost word for word with that of the greatest German politician of our time, might well illustrate the

* Ne'er was a people just towards the stranger as thou art.
Be not too just; they think not nobly enough to see
How fair thy failing is.

undying tenacity of popular characteristics, and banish optimistic expectations from the recent constellation of German greatness.

Allied to this traditional incapacity for united action, history records a strange unreadiness for action of any decisive kind. The French knew this by experience, and always associated the idea of unreadiness with the Germans—they were always waiting to be attacked. Napoleon aptly suggested this in a letter during one of his campaigns. "Send me biscuits and brandy for 50,000 men; it is easy enough to beat the Germans, but not without the biscuits," &c. Ludwig Börne tells us a German will wear his coat threadbare whilst making up his mind whether to have a new button sewn on it or not. Their sayings, "Nach und nach" (Little by little), "Eile mit Weile" (Haste with leisure), reflect this national idiosyncrasy.

Thus Shakespeare is supposed to have portrayed the typical German in Hamlet—the philosophizing prince, who utters the wisest axioms without being able to bring himself to act upon them.

If this portrayal be true, then an explanation is found for the fact that they could never help themselves until men were found at the head of affairs who united the idealism of a Hamlet with the bold decision of an Anglo-Saxon Cromwell.

More than this, the salvation of Germany had to come from a people that was not purely German by race. Bismarck himself has stated his conviction that the admixture of Slavonic blood in the old Prussian provinces has given them those blind dog-like tough

qualities of devotion and obedience that enabled Frederick the Great to win his battles with them, and thus to lay the foundation of Prussia's hegemony of to-day. The old provinces of Prussia are in unity of patriotism and power of recovery more like the French than any other part of Germany.

This material, led by genius, has always done its work cleanly. It met the Austrians at Leuthen, in the slanting battle-line of Epaminondas, 36,000 against 85,000. It drove the French like hares at Rossbach. The French never properly realized this, and only remembered Jena, when this same material, defectively organized and led by hopeless imbecility, went down before the greatest captain of the age. The French only remembered the Germans as a disunited herd, that always waited to be attacked and never took the offensive. They forget those days are gone for ever since Prussia, that always took the initiative, leads the van. The defensive is an Austrian speciality; it is typical of that brave, but unready, indolent nation that in '66, true to its old instincts, gloated over its cleverness in enticing the Prussians into Bohemia in order to eat them when once there.

Formerly, this Austrian characteristic distinguished all Germany; to-day, Prussia is striving hard to eradicate it. Yet even now, wherever Prussia is not directly administrative, traces of that delightful little German quality, procrastination or unreadiness, shows its cloven foot, not to mention the still older idiosyncrasy of discord and doctrinarism. This makes us believe that if the Prussians had not brought them salvation they would never have got it, and without their guidance they would

to-morrow forfeit it again and their country once more become the battle-field of Europe.

Yet these procrastinating, unready Austrians were always popular with the masses in the same proportion as the Prussians were disliked, even in provinces such as those of the Rhine that but recently came under Prussian sway. Only the intellectual few long recognized the superb qualities of honesty, economy, order, and devotion to duty that everywhere distinguished the Prussian administration. Thus the recognition has been a slow process based on respect, the safest of foundations, and those who pinned their sympathies to Austria have had time to discover that, in this instance, the head offered no justification for the leanings of the heart.

It would seem that national characteristics, which, like all other characteristics, according to Darwin, must be the result of infinitely long-standing influences, die hard. Happily, a national character is not composed of one or even two unfortunate traits, but of many qualities, some of which go to annul and obliterate the working of others. Thus, the Germans, whom only yesterday we witnessed reddening their fields with blood in fratricidal strife, we behold to-day thronging round a young Emperor in a genuine outburst of patriotic ideality, ready to call out, "Ave Cæsar Imperator, morituri te salutant!"

All well-wishers of Germany must hope that this genuine feeling of patriotism will long form a rallying-point round which all shall gather who are prepared to do and die for their country.

II.

It is a peculiar fact, and one that speaks highly for the intellectual capacities of the race, that, whereas all times and many countries have produced severe critics of the German character, their bitterest censors have been found among their most eminent countrymen. The nation of thinkers and critics has indeed produced severe critics of themselves—anatomists who have studied the anatomy of character from their own *corpus vile*. It is scarcely necessary to do more than mention the names of Frederick the Great, Lessing, Goethe, Schopenhauer, and, to-day, Bismarck himself. They have accused the nation of its dilatory failings, its doctrinarism, and its tendency to discord. And this very people has always had a word of admiration for the qualities of other races.

Yet it is only fair to ask, May not this incapacity in the past of rallying round one central personage, this doctrinarism, be the unfortunate offshoots of that anxious and hopeless pondering over and striving for an impossible ideal that has enabled the Germans to achieve such wonders in the fields of science and philosophy? Has not this politically unfortunate characteristic been intensified by historical circumstance of exceptional unfavourableness? And may we not assume that the fact of the old German Empire having been an elective kingdom in the past largely fostered national discord?

There is only one other analogous example of an elective kingdom in history to draw a parallel with, and in the very mention of its name the moral is self-evident—Poland! The incapacity of the exalted few in

whose hands the national destinies were collectively placed, to subordinate their pretensions to rule to the claim of any one family in the interests of all, has had in both instances similar, though fortunately not equal, results.

Surely there is something interesting and instructive in the above, for there is no denying the long-standing popular longing for national unity. Does not the legend of the Emperor Barbarossa bear witness to it? Does not a gleam of romance break through the Middle-Ages and show us the ideal figure of the Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederick II. (A. D. 1250)? And has not popular sentiment woven a wreath of undying poetry round the person of this cultured and unfortunate champion of national greatness against Papal supremacy?

Since that time the Germans have ever been fighting for union, and often in the agony of strife have they forgotten what they were striving for, and thought only of feud and battle.

III.

After the death of the Emperor Frederick the power of the petty princes and of the aristocracy increased so immeasurably that there failed to rise to the surface any one predominant influence for long. The German King and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, elected from among themselves, was always powerless to further the consolidation of national unity. Yet the national longing still survived and embodied itself in the myth of the Kyffhäuser, where Barbarossa sat in somnolent state, guarded by ravens, biding the time of the re-awakening of national unity and splendour.

We require an effort of the imagination even to recall that there was a time when the German Emperor ruled a country on which the sun ne'er set, when Germany was the home of merchant princes who helped their monarch from their private means,* when German architecture was the most splendid, when German life was the most luxurious, and German manufactures the most renowned. It was the time of Charles V. of Hapsburg, when France's King was Germany's prisoner, when Spain, with its newly discovered American possessions, when from the Netherlands to the frontier of Poland to the east and unto the Alps to the south, the whole centre of Europe bowed to German sway.

That was the moment for a great political figure to appear, and, rallying the nation around it, to consolidate a strong hereditary empire in the centre of Europe. The dawn of a new era to turn to for hope had begun, for Luther had appeared on the scene, and, single-handed, stood his ground against the powers of Rome. "Yes, I will go to Worms, even if the house-tops are crowded with devils," said this mighty German. A spiritual Bismarck was there to point to a new God, but the Hapsburg Emperor was no King William to draw the sword in his name.

Thus the Reformation, instead of uniting Germany, led to its deepest political degradation—the "Thirty Years' War"—out of which it emerged with its population reduced from sixteen millions to less than five, and with a loss of national wealth from which it has even now only partially recovered.

* The rich Fuggers of Augsburg, who assisted Charles V. with their wealth.

For centuries the Kaiser was more or less a foreign potentate. The national feeling longed for a German Kaiser, not for a Spaniard or even an Austrian. Thus for centuries the Germans were like the fragments in a kaleidoscope, without cohesion, yet presenting brilliant, unexpected pictures, rarely coloured, but repeated at the will of a stranger. Bismarck has said, "The Germans are capable of everything if once anger or necessity should unite them."

This we have seen to be true, but it wanted the uniting central personalities, and only when these came could the best capacities of the race find expression. That an indomitable spirit worthy of a great nation was never wanting is proved by history. The fighting capacities and fidelity of even German mercenaries at all times and in all parts of the world—Rome, the Italian Republics, and in America—are attested by many writers. Even in recent times, when Napoleon I. was deserted by his followers, those with German names were most true to him. This German militant fidelity (*Deutsche Treue*) is no vain boast, though through the lack of unity it had little to hold to or to encourage it. In the "Thirty Years' War" they fought the battle of others. The "Seven Years' War," which first gave Protestant Germany a chance, yet failed to afford a rallying-point to all.

Strange, indeed, it is that the rich German language, although it has a word for "patriotism," has none for "patriot." It has even a word for being without a country, a unique word, "Vaterlandslos," thus pointing to the history of its past.

IV.

After Napoleon I. had made a clean sweep of the political chessboard, and he in his turn had vanished to eat out his ambitious heart in a desert island, the difficulty still remained—whom to invest with the national aspirations? Had a Cavour arisen then to champion the nation's legitimate rights against the jealousy of the Allied Powers, Germany would have annexed Alsace in 1815, Lorraine might still be French, and the war of 1870 might never have been fought!

But the idea of unity, nurtured at all times at the universities, lived on among the true aristocrats of the nation; among the best of every class, from the highest to the humblest; it maintained itself most vigorously in the middle class.

Thus the longing for unity had still to live on in the national heart, and, stronger than ever through the sad period of reaction from 1815 to 1848, it found popular vent in that noble song: "Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?" which answered the question in the refrain:

Where'er the German tongue doth sound,
There must the Fatherland be found.

This national feeling came to a head in the revolution of 1848. The people asked not for a republic; they longed for unity. And its expression was not thrown away; although fruitless at the time, the Frankfurt Parliament prepared the way for Prussia.

In the foreground stood Austria and Prussia, conscious of the national longing—jealously confronting each other. But until the latter had shown, as if by magic,

When Prussia's eagle swept fair Austria's lands

in seven days, that she could beat the former, few could discern in her the realizer of popular dreams. The hopeless misery of the past had left the petty fear of becoming "Prussianized" to obscure the greater goal: to rise through Prussia to a greater Germany.

Only when the late Emperor William had fulfilled the promise he held out in 1866, that he would hold the interests of Germany paramount and highest, has the gradual revolution of feeling become complete—the recognition by the majority that the national ideal has at last been in a great measure realized by Prussia.

Such are the broad outlines of fact bearing on the realization of the national longing for unity. Yet it would be gross superficiality to think that the lucky rolling of the iron dice alone brought it about. When Napoleon I. vanquished Prussia and humbled her to the dust in one day, the best qualities of a nation awoke from a long sleep.

Prussia was not allowed to keep a standing army above 42,000 men. Stein, Scharnhorst, and von der Kneesebeck (a weighty man, little known to popular readers) planned a secret system by which the greater part of the male population was speedily passed through the army between the years 1807 and 1813. This system was secretly and successfully carried out without it being betrayed to the French. A people that could act thus was worthy to form the nucleus of a new Empire. It remains one of the grandest traits of national character in history, this instance of not one single traitor being found among a whole people. This effacement of the individual before the interests of the

community runs like a red thread through the history of civil as well as of military Prussia.

It is in the grit of the Prussian character, and its gradual recognition by Germany as a whole, that we must seek the real key to what the thoughtless crowd would put down as the mere natural results of fortunate soldiering alone.

The House of Hohenzollern has fostered the hardest qualities of a strong hardy race, and forged a sword for it. The genius of its leaders has guided the working out of its highest destiny in our time.

V.

German unity has been fought for and gained in spite of desperate opposition from within and from without; it has still to encounter many more or less inimical influences from within. In addition to the difficulties arising from unfitness of character were differences of institutions both social and legal. The North, principally Protestant, is still in part intensely aristocratic, and, more lately, honeycombed with Socialism; whereas the West and the South have felt the waves of the French Revolution and are democratic, besides being largely Catholic. There are millions of Germans who place their allegiance to the Pope above that to their Sovereign. It is German doctrinarism that makes this possible—instinctive doctrinarism in those who do not even know the meaning of the word. For Catholics in other countries have rarely allowed their religion to nullify their patriotism.

The Pope himself soon dropped his attempts to side with the English Government against the Irish peasants

when the latter, through their Protestant representatives, plainly intimated that they would have none of his interference. But Irish patriotism is doubtless a hardier plant than German "Vaterlandsliebe" has hitherto been. It is only in Germany that a man such as Dr. Windhorst, a sworn hater of united Germany under Prussia, could have the following he has.

But sentiments that owed their origin to Catholic or Guelphic partisanship have often been taken up by those who had no other excuse for sharing them than blind party passion and envy. They have often been taken up by men who were neither separatist Alsacians nor Catholic Poles, but *bonâ-fide* self-asserting Germans.

Because advocates of social reforms cannot have them carried out in their own way, jealousy bids them do their best to asperse the motives of others equally well intentioned as they themselves are (though this must be admitted to be also a parliamentary feature nearer home). It is even on record that a Heidelberg Professor of world-wide reputation, who had preached the gospel of unity all his life, rushed away to Italy in the sulks when it came in a different form to that which he had prescribed for it!

Because the "Iron Chancellor" is diffident of the practicability of the ready-made theories of Manchester, which Liberal enthusiasts would have him accept as the crowning of the State edifice, therefore every initiative of the State must be opposed, and that only too often in a petty and venomous spirit. It is not so much opposition itself as the spirit thereof that is to be deplored. The daily increasing hate and estrangement between the different political parties is already

showing the incapacity of parliamentary government to harmonize the differences of feeling in the community; if anything, it only tends to accentuate them.

Even if some of these elements do not direct their energies against unity itself, they have often been directed against the avowed policy of its immediate founders.

Still, we are in fairness bound to ask ourselves: May not some of the opposition Bismarck has ever encountered in the execution of his far-seeing plans often have been an exaggerated manifestation of that independence of individual conscientious thought which will not yield itself captive even to the glamour of military prowess? And, if it be so, can we quite help bestowing a mite of admiration, even where we feel bound to condemn its results?

Can we, again, refuse a tribute of respect when we meet such instances of personal unselfish devotion to a lost cause as from time immemorial every turn of the political wheel of fortune has called forth in Germany? We may deplore the attachment to a lost cause that obscures the vision for a broader and nobler one that has grown into a splendid reality, but we cannot condemn the instinct that blinds those to the future whose heart unselfishly clings to a past, be it never so poor in the eyes of the looker on.

But, besides opposition of the kind hinted at above, there remains much that cannot be put down either to noble or unselfish motives.

The petty but honest feeling of narrow State loyalty has been Germany's political curse, for it obscured the horizon of a broader national firmament; but the idea

of unity has had other enemies to deal with. These, if not so powerful in the aggregate, have yet caused Germany's leaders many a pang of sorrow and disappointment. We mean that spirit of Philistinism, of envy and distrust, alternating with indifference, which only the stirring hours of a death-grapple cast temporarily in the background. It comes to the front again in all its ugliness with the return of peace and security.

Such are some of the dangerous elements Germany will have to grapple with still when those mighty men have all passed away to whom the Fatherland is so immensely indebted.

VI.

Misfortune has taught the Germans many a lesson, and doubtless benefited them; still, they have not passed through the fire of the past without the development of peculiarities of character, which are more or less distinctly traceable to the sufferings they have endured.

It is difficult to believe that some of the petty failings of to-day were existent in the olden times of national splendour. In those days German life could not show that amount of littleness, of hyper-sensitive-ness, of personal spite and petty malice and envy, that have been often noticed and deplored in later times.

Such qualities could not flourish amidst the pomp and panoply of national prosperity. They could but be the ugly offshoot born of oppression, poverty, and misery. And now that there seems a great future in store for Germany, her friends can only hope that qualities which owed their existence to misfortune—as

disease owes its presence to dirt—shall gradually disappear at the re-awakening of the best instincts of this mighty race. This is the more to be wished as such qualities are largely answerable for the perpetuation of the oldest German national failing, discord. That since 1870 a broader national feeling has steadily increased is admitted on all hands. Yet these are not the only effects of victory; it has put many off their guard as to the dangers to be provided against in the future.

The history of a thousand years is not nullified by the victories of one generation, even though such victories be the result of a long-sustained system of discipline and a universal acceptance of heroic duty. The defects of the national character which bade Teutons themselves desert their national hero, Arminius, which enabled a Richelieu to sway the conduct of the "Thirty Years' War," defects which have made Germans slavishly bow down to titles of rulers gained in return for the slaughter of their own countrymen*—such may be scotched, but they were not killed at Sadowa or Sedan. Nor were they choked by the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles.

The political pauperism of the past, the petty and half-dormant, if not torpid social life of centuries have generated idiosyncrasies that will only be gradually obliterated by sustained moral effort. The constant danger arising from these is intensified when we bear in mind what has just been noted—the social and

* The present titles of the rulers of Saxony, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden, and Hesse-Darmstadt were the creations of Napoleon I. In each case they signify a step in advance on the previous one held by their possessors.

political differences in the population of North and South.

The Germans are a sensitive people, and yet, with this and all their peculiarities, they possess an impartiality of judgment in some things that is in many ways remarkable. The Germans often use the word "Objectivität" (objectiveness), and they have some reason for doing so. Bismarck has accused them of being ashamed of their nationality abroad and of adopting the bad qualities of the people amongst whom they live. With regard to the first accusation, a foundation for it in the past cannot be denied. But there was also something to explain it; the national tendency to objectiveness explains it.

Germans abroad have generally come from a class that has more acute perceptions for material than for ideal advantages. Thus, in coming abroad, seeing larger practical and material conditions of life, they looked back with contempt on the petty parochial character of life in their native land; those that leave their country do not, as a rule, possess ideality enough to cherish their country for that, though there were at all times exceptions. The German abroad becomes more practical, but loses in a spiritual sense; he assimilates the utilitarian features of the country he lives in, only too often to lose touch with the ideality of his native land, which should make him prouder of his country than of her recent victories. This bewildering outward aspect of practical life in England and America also explains why travelling Englishmen are so often unable to appreciate what is the strong side of German life—its culture. They only see the outside, and, as

that was hitherto more striking in our country, their opinion of the country has ever been such a shallow one.

This objectiveness is shown in the judgment of their enemies. The English and French either hate their enemies and slander them, or when they have beaten them have a contempt for them. Napoleon I. always felt a strong contempt for his enemies. Not so the Germans. They invariably speak with respect of their enemies, even be they those they have beaten—such as the Danes, the Austrians, and the French—or the Russians. It is perhaps one of their soundest national traits, from a military point of view, that they invariably over-estimate their enemies, for this characteristic has certainly not made them afraid to meet them. Even the inimitable Boulanger they at first took *au sérieux*, and only spoke of him with contempt when he showed characteristics that would have ruined him in twenty-four hours had he been a German.

Bearing the character of the military successes of Germany in mind, we have always been struck by the “comparative” absence of national self-assertion.

The Prussians, who used to be considered individually and collectively arrogant and overbearing, even by the Germans themselves, have largely lost the reputation for such attributes now that their worth has been more generally recognized, for in the lack of honest recognition such qualities often have their origin. We shall deal with the Philistine by himself, but the more intelligent the individual we meet, the more moderate the views invariably held; and even among the comparatively uncultured that senseless bounce we often deplore in other nations is mostly absent.

VII.

Up to the present, whatever may be said to the contrary, chauvinism is not a national German failing. Some affect to deplore the marked military—not to say nationally assertive—tendencies of the present Emperor, and look back with regret to the Liberal and humanitarian temperament of his father. But one thing seems certain: as long as in certain quarters humanitarianism and Liberalism imply a possibility of yielding one inch of what has been gained by such sacrifices of blood and treasure, so long Germany cannot afford to indulge too readily in those excellent qualities. It is a sad truth, but it is an important one. That arch-wiseacre, General Ignatieff, tells us that immediately after '70 he ironically congratulated the Germans on having annexed "an open wound" in Alsace and Lorraine! As if the French did not harbour revenge against England during nearly half-a-century after Waterloo, although England did not despoil them of an inch of territory! When will reasonable beings be able to see that French vanity would have been as irrevocably wounded by the loss of one battle as by the loss of half-a-dozen provinces, and—the most important point—she would have remained more powerful to resent it!

Immediately after the war of '70, a brilliant Paris journalist of German birth, Albert Wolff, wrote a book, gingerly putting the French in the wrong, but winding up with the declaration that he was ashamed of his native land that it had not used its victory to be generous and forborne to wrest territory from France! It is indeed a sad inheritance from the past that such ideas should find serious acceptance. People never

think of suggesting or expecting that we, or the French, or the Russians are going to forego the fruits of victory or to yield up the price of their blood. The Germans have a right to be taken equally *au sérieux*, and their well-wishers will not easily quarrel with the means they use to attain that legitimate end.

Let the Emperor taboo the French language, let Bismarck refuse to be addressed in that tongue. The time may come when it will be considered as inconsiderate to address Germans on equal conditions in any other language than their own as it is now the case with Frenchmen, Americans, or Englishmen. When that comes to pass, then the nonsense of treating political Germany as the poor boy of the nursery book will cease, and until then it will be quite time to speak of German chauvinism.

Amidst much mist and darkness there is a bright star in the national character that has not shown itself of late, for it requires defeat and national humiliation in order to witness its brilliancy. It is German valour and fidelity under defeat. It is one of the fairest attributes of the national character; it is ideal. History is full of it, and well may the nation be proud of its record. Even that rabid chauvinist historian, Thiers,* has gone out of his way to bear testimony to the fighting endurance of defeated Germany, and to its fidelity to its unhappy leaders.

* "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire."

CHAPTER II.

INTELLECTUAL LIFE.

We classify a range of mountains according to the altitude of its highest peaks.—ANON.

I.

IF we follow the history of intellectual development in England, and its bearing on the material achievements of the English people, we perceive that one of the reasons why the latter have achieved so much is that they have rarely striven but for what they could grasp. Like Bismarck in this, they have ever taken one thing practically in hand at a time.

There is comparatively little dreamy ideality in our race; and, in the higher Grecian sense of the word, of the ceaseless striving after the ideally true and beautiful, next to none. But, instead of that, we have ever possessed the great secret of attaining practical success in what we soberly undertook; the wisdom of common-sense, thoroughly consistent with genius, has ever been ours in a pre-eminent degree.

Darwin—perhaps the most typical Englishman of the century—of all others, might have been justified in conjuring up imaginary pictures of the past and evolving ideals for the future; yet he remains satisfied with the positive—not to say negative—results of his researches, and leaves ideal speculation to others.

It has been reserved for the Germans, and notably for Prof. Haeckel, of Jena, to speculate where Darwin had been content to glean facts.

Thus, German idealism—in this instance revealing

itself in materialistic speculation—tells us what we “might” attain, whilst our want of idealism is perhaps the cause of what we “have” achieved.

But idealism does far more than this. It instinctively bids us feel that knowledge of every kind is power to be used for a high purpose. It embodies the highest aspirations of genius, and is the key to the full understanding of its loftiest flights. It is, strange to say, almost a monopoly of the German race; in fact, the people who are most near to them, such as the Dutch, notably lack it. It is true, idealism has often spelt failure and reminded us of Ikaros with the waxen wings. And yet the restless striving after an—often unattainable—ideal is at the root of some of the greatest thoughts of the Teutonic muse, of German science, as well as of some of the best manifestations of German character.

In science, the idealizing principle is perhaps more active than anywhere else. It supplies initiative impulse, the interest of new colours and of knowledge touched with wonder. The spectrum analysis is only one of many illustrations. The most amazing invention of the century—the spectroscope—is the work of two Germans, Bunsen and Kirchhoff.

German idealism places science on so high a pedestal that money-making by its votaries is looked upon as almost degrading.* In practical England, the

* Those organs of public opinion both here and abroad which have taken part in a recent controversy, and in so doing have spoken disparagingly of German men of science, have hardly shown a deep insight into their leading characteristics. They are a sensitive body of men, not devoid of pedantry, and one individual is no sufficient measure to judge them by; but when the consensus of their action

more money a man of science can make the more we think of him. We are more apt to worship outward success in a thing than the thing itself. Hence, we are more liable to accept charlatans than the Germans, and science lacks with us the true spiritual dignity it possesses in Germany. Faraday—in this a rare exception—held up a tradition which, alas! has had no followers. The simple, even humble, life that eminent men of science often lead in Germany would seem astonishing to us, who are accustomed to see men of science made social lions.

II.

Though many are of opinion that the Fine Arts and Belles-lettres in Germany are to-day, with few exceptions, represented merely by a number of talented epigones, there can be no doubt of the array of great names in the domains of science.* Here we are met

is taken, it may safely be said to be above suspicion of motive. For, generally speaking, though doubtless exceptions will be found here as elsewhere, Germany's leading scientific men are of a stamp that would not jeopardize the sincerity of their conviction for any worldly advantage whatsoever.

* The following is from the pen of an American authority on the state of science in Germany in the present day:—"Three countries divide the scientific world between them—Germany, England, and France. The writings of each bear the stamp of their special character and qualities. Germany to-day is at the head of the scientific world. At the beginning of the century it was France, but German influence is now greater than ever that of France was. The students that used to go to Paris now go to Germany. They come back imbued with German doctrines, and with but one aim, that of propagating and following these doctrines out. Thus they have spread all over the world, and have become accepted by nearly every European country," &c. &c.

by capacities of the very first rank, and that in almost every branch. To pick out a few names at random: We have already referred to Bunsen and Kirchhoff, who conclusively proved the existence of terrestrial matter in the sun. To Prof. Czermak Germany owes the discovery of the laryngoscope, and to Prof. Helmholtz that of the ophthalmoscope, which latter has revolutionized ophthalmic medicine, besides Helmholtz's wonderful discoveries relating to the natural laws that govern acoustics, not to forget his philosophical works. The discoveries of salicylic acid, cocaine, and, latest of all, saccharine, must be credited to German science of to-day. The recent discoveries of Dr. Koch are attracting the most intense interest throughout the civilised world.

In Prof. Virchow Germany has not only one of the most eminent anthropologists of our time, but a physiologist of unique standing.

In surgery the names of Langenbeck (Berlin), Billroth (Vienna), Nussbaum (Munich), Scanzoni (Würzburg), Esmarch (Kiel), speak for themselves.

In jurisprudence the names of Prof. Windscheidt (Leipzig), Prof. Gneist (Berlin), Dr. von Holtzendorf (Munich), are of cosmopolitan renown, as may also be said of the two eminent statisticians, Dr. Ernst Engel and Laspeyres.

In history Mommsen is still living to carry on those earnest researches connected with the name of his late compeer and master, Leopold von Ranke.

In geology the names of Prof. Zirkel (Leipzig) and Prof. Rosenbusch (Heidelberg) are as highly esteemed as that of G. von Richthofen (Berlin) is in geography.

In speculative science and metaphysics men such as

Eduard von Hartmann (of the pessimistic school, but with a perhaps unconscious leaning towards Herbert Spencer), Moritz Carrière (the champion of the so-called realistic ideal school), are more or less representative, and the influence of the former is largely felt throughout the length and breadth of the Fatherland.

Although it is beyond our purpose to do more than mention a few of the representative men of Germany to-day, there is one reflection we cannot suppress, and that is that almost all the above-mentioned eminent men are serving the State in some public capacity or other—hardly one of Germany's great scientific names that is not drawn away from the drudgery of mere money-making and installed in some position most fitted to enable him to spread and propagate the fruits of his genius.

III.

In literature the greatest works of Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller show signs of a restless craving to find a higher and nobler channel for expressing their ideas. Literature was to these men a medium of conveying philosophy under pleasant and even playful forms. All had one end in view—to strike a chord of broad common consciousness.

Herder was one of the most egotistically ideal of men in native constitution, yet we see him for years sacrificing his original powers of production to collecting the "Volkslieder" of his own and other nations, because his egotism was subdued by an intellectual German sense of the common interests in life, which should be reflected in song and story.

Lessing, indeed, always protested that he was no poet, and that they made a mistake in calling him one; that he was merely a poor philosophical critic, seeking the best channel to communicate his ideas, which he found in the drama. Thus, his "Nathan the Wise" is still the most eloquent appeal in favour of tolerance.

The correspondence between Goethe and Schiller proves how much their individual bent in this respect was at one with the lessons of their greater works; the discipline of a high ideal was to be found in its application in the commonest things. "Wilhelm Meister," in its first aspect, seems the most ideal of books, and yet in its second part it passes into a glorification of ordinary domestic life and duty. Still more so, and still more surprising, is the fact that Faust, after all his dreams and aspirations, has to become a reclamer of land and a roadmaker, and in this to find the way of his salvation—contentment and peace.

No men of equal eminence were ever so little pleased with their efforts as Goethe and Schiller, for the picture of something still higher was constantly before them to make them dissatisfied with their attempts to reach it and urge them on to greater efforts. This peculiarity of the German mind strikes us the more when we recall Shakspeare, whose stupendous genius apparently seems to have thrown off its immortal products almost unconsciously.

According to Friedrich Bodenstedt, the eminent German poet and translator of Shakspeare, the dramatic poetry of his country cannot compare in originality with that of our own. But German literature can boast of a speciality which, though far from original, is yet

unique and of far-reaching importance as a means of culture.

We mean the splendid array of literary men, who have devoted their whole life's work to the translation of the masterpieces of foreign literature into German. Their name is legion, and men among them, such as Tieck, the two Schlegels, Voss, and Bodenstedt himself, can be said to have contributed more to the culture of the people by their translations than many well-known names by their original productions. Even a monarch ranks among their number; the late King John of Saxony translated Dante. No country can compare with Germany in its array of literary talent, which, led by true idealism to open up new channels of literary wealth to the nation, devoted its labour in unselfish earnestness to the comparatively thankless task of re-production.

IV.

In the present time other elements and a more cosmopolitan run of public taste have put their stamp on the literary productions of the day.

Thus, in Berlin, a man such as Paul Lindau, attracts our attention beyond all comparison to the literary value of his work, for his ephemeral popularity is a distinct sign of the times.

Figuratively speaking, Teuton stomachs were satiated and German brains were weary of the long-winded discursive novel of the first half of the century, dragging its tape-worm existence through eight or ten volumes, and had long sought refuge in excellent translations of Walter Scott, Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, and other English writers.

Other branches of literature, too, suffered from heaviness of style when, about the time of the new order of things, Paul Lindau came to the front in Berlin and offered the public a taste of the bright, concise, and yet light style of narrative and essay which France and England have long been familiar with. And the good Berliners, who had long chafed under the bit of cumbersome philosophizing *à la* Schelling and Hegel, gladly welcomed the sparkling wit of the young barrister.

In this direction there can be no doubt that Lindau has not only done good work, but has almost founded a style of literature in which Germany had hitherto been lamentably deficient. It is in part his doing if we can no longer with justice smile at the unvarying "ponderosity" of German letters. Of course, such masters of sparkling German prose as Heine, Schopenhauer, Börne, David Strauss, and Johannes Scherr had preceded and influenced the public far more, even by the mere form of their productions. Still, the fact remains that, of living German writers, Paul Lindau has contributed his share to give a more airy and crisp tone to the light literature of the day.

The same favourable verdict cannot be given if we examine his dramatic works, which, inspired by French or Spanish models, are neither French nor German in sentiment, and have only had ephemeral, if not questionable, success.

Again, in his predilection for the more realistic school of French novel-writers, Lindau can hardly be said to have exercised a favourable influence.

In Gustav Freytag we name the most gifted and

sterling of all German writers of fiction of the present day. He is the portrayer of German life *par excellence*, not only in the present, but in the past, and that with an unrivalled power and truth of interpretation. Freytag's is the genius of the true born romancist allied to the conscientious thoroughness of the German Professor without his pedantry. He has never lent his pen to pander to the sentiment of the hour, and is looked up to and admired by high and humble alike. Quite recently the late Emperor William conferred on him the highest distinction—the order “pour le mérite,” the same order Thomas Carlyle was proud to accept although he refused the Grand Cross of the Bath. Next to Gustav Freytag, Spielhagen perhaps occupies the next prominent position as German novelist.

Paul Heyse as a poet, a novel-writer, and dramatist occupies a very prominent position in the literary world. A born poet, he strongly inclines towards the sentimental—not to say hyper-sentimental. Starting as a novelist at an early age, he at once became the favourite of German womankind. His descriptive power is Southern in its luxurious richness and dreaminess; but, unfortunately, most of his tales—for he is a story-teller more than a novel-writer (Germans, in their thoroughness, making a great distinction between the two)—show a want of manly ruggedness in conception and execution. That is doubtless the reason his dramatic works have hitherto only had a *succès d'estime*. Some of his lyric poems are remarkable for their beauty of sentiment and diction.

Prof. Ebers is another typical figure in literature, and his success has been largely due to his appeal to

that instinct which loves to idealize the history of the far removed past which is so strong in the German character. Prof. Ebers is an eminent scientific Egyptologist, and his novels, weaving historical matter into the form of narrative romance, have not only found countless readers in Germany, but they have been widely read in English and other translations.

Of female novelists the number, as with us, is legion, and great are the differences of opinion as to the literary value of their productions. For our purpose it may suffice to point to one of the youngest, if not the most promising, who writes under the pseudonym of Ossip Schubin. She describes the life of the aristocracy and the more cultured classes with an analysis of character almost Thackerayan. She is evidently a woman who lives much in society, and the characters she describes are said to be so true to life as to be easily recognizable by those who are acquainted with the circles she moves in. Ossip Schubin's novels are also remarkable for their boldness of conception and for their ingenious plots.

Friedrich Bodenstedt is not only a dramatic poet of signal culture and power, but is best known by a somewhat exceptional feat in the history of literature. He lived for many years in the East, and besides a fascinating account of life in Asia Minor, entitled "A Thousand and One Days in the East," he published a collection of exquisite lyric poems under the title of "The Songs of Mirza Schaffy." It would lead us too far to dwell on the excellence of this unique volume; suffice it to say that it was published under circumstances which left the impression that the poems were

nothing more than translations of original Oriental poetry, such as the "Songs of Hafiz" and others. This impression was the more likely to gain ground from the fact of Bodenstedt's recognized position as a translator of Shakspeare. However, such was not the case; the work is entirely original. "The Songs of Mirza Schaffy" have run through more than one hundred editions, and are destined to remain a lasting monument of Bodenstedt's genius.

V.

In dramatic literature, although its critics continually rail against the shallow taste of the day (as they have done at all times), Germany possesses a long list of names, which, if hardly in one instance equal to the best dramatic writers of France, are yet far above any single one we could put forward among our own living authors.

Ernst von Wildenbruch is a dramatic author of great depth and power. In him the German ideal romantic tendency is very strong, but, unfortunately (as is so often the case with German writers), his characters lose themselves completely in philosophic concentration at the expense of the action of the play.

Arthur Fitger is another writer of great dramatic force and originality; his tragedy "Die Hexe" (The Witch) is a play of classic dimensions, and deals with the religious intolerance of past ages.

Richard Voss, Oscar Blumenthal, L'Arronge, Franz von Schönthan, and Hugo Lubbliner, although scarcely typical enough to call for special note, are yet original and fertile writers of a high order of merit, and many

of their plays have been honoured by translation and adaptation.

Gustav von Moser is typically representative of a light and airy dramatic style, unembarrassed by heavy ethical aims, and yet far removed from pruriency, the former qualities being at all times *rareæ aves* in German literature. He is entirely original both in his workmanship and in the characters he has drawn. The latter are taken from life, and include almost every type to be met with, from the Prussian martinet general down to the boots at a country inn. Not only do his plays enjoy an unprecedented popularity in Germany, but some of them have been even more successful in other countries, and made large fortunes for English and American theatre proprietors.

Last, but not least, Anzengruber, although an Austrian, must be classed among eminent German writers, the more so as his works are typically German in character. Not only in his stories, but in dramatic works of great originality and power, he has faithfully described humble and peasant life. More than that, many of his narrative works possess a special interest from their dealing with the social questions of the day in a broad and heartfelt spirit.

VI.

In philosophy we find again the ideal influence present, notably in the works of Schelling and Hegel, whose endeavour to solve the dread secrets that surround us was so strongly mingled with the desire to find a solution which accorded most with their ideal of the beautiful. But as the human mind seems doomed

to failure before these master-problems, so also the philosophy of Hegel and Schelling has but remained as a monument of how unavailable idealism alone is to solve them. It was reserved for Kant to pin down idealism to the realisation of the call of Duty. In his own words thus defined: "Duty—wondrous thought that worketh neither by fond insinuation, flattery, nor by any threat, but merely by holding up thy naked law in the soul, and so extorting for thyself, always reverence, if not always obedience, before whom all appetites are dumb, however secretly they rebel!"

Since Immanuel Kant spoke his last word, and wedded ideality with the stern duty of ethics, no one has been able to add to it. His dictum of the "categorical imperative," the call of duty on us all to regulate our race towards the unattainable, remains to-day the key-note of German intellectual and ethical life. In fact, it is impossible to study the ethical and intellectual life of Germany without being impressed by the vast influence which the teaching of the Königsberg philosopher still exercises over its best minds, and through them has gradually sifted into the masses, almost unconsciously to them. Even the sublime thoughts of Goethe, and in our day the speculations which the Germans draw from the researches of Darwin, seem only to have intensified the influence of Kant. It seems as if, in a sea of conflicting speculation, the intellect of the nation were forced to turn back to that strong, courageous brain, who said in effect:—

"We are unable to pierce the past, the future is hidden from us, but the categorical imperative call of duty to be performed stares us in the face—the obliga-

tion of one and all of us to do our share, and to live up to the highest ethical and æsthetical standard we can formulate, without regard to reward or punishment, and before the worship of every other ideal."

VII.

Thus we find the sense of duty meeting us everywhere in Germany in a strength hardly realized by other countries. The narrow-minded selfishness of the individual, the jealousy, the envy of the unit, shrinks aside before the supreme spirit of altruistic virtue embodied in this acceptance of the supremacy of duty.

Prof. Billroth—perhaps the greatest living surgeon—in his recent illness was given up, and, calling his younger colleagues around him, said: "We doctors mustn't deceive ourselves with regard to an illness. We are familiar with death; I more than you, for I am nearer to it. I asked you to come here in order to say good-bye to you. Who knows whether to-morrow I shall be able to do so? I thank you all for your labours; remain faithful to science; devote yourselves to it as hitherto."

This reference to duty—this key-note struck in the supreme moment, with an entire forgetfulness of meaner self—is one that finds an echo right through the length and breadth of the Fatherland in the hearts of the large majority of its best and noblest sons. It has a familiar sound to us, when we go back to those annals that record the growing greatness of England. Was it not the ever memorable key note of Nelson's message at the battle of Trafalgar? It even conveys a lesson to us all in these latter days when many are groping their way

to find an ethical standard to live by; for, according to a recent writer, "such knowledge of God as He has vouchsafed to us is revealed to us by our perception of causation and our idea of duty."*

Yet men like Billroth—and he is a representative type—are not melancholy psalm-singers, who walk through life crushed with the oppressive weight of a dread ordeal ever staring them in the face. Far from it. Billroth in private life is an accomplished musician and painter. And this recalls another striking feature of German intellectual life: its affinity to the spirit of ancient Greece, the people of which were so gifted in beautifying the life they led.

VIII.

In politics—that one science people everywhere take to without a question as to knowledge or fitness—German idealism has counted its saddest failures. Notably was this so when, in the hopeless attempt to evolve a system that would help the Fatherland, it was driven to seek models abroad, and, above all, to fall in love with our method of parliamentary government! Luckily, the man of the hour put an end to that when he told his countrymen, "No, gentlemen; only with blood and iron shall we get what we are all striving for—a great united Fatherland." In the Emperor William and in Bismarck we find, for the first time in Germany, the national tendency to idealize allied to the rugged common-sense of action, and the result has been the fulfilment of a national dream that wanted this rare union of qualities

* Article entitled "Sins of Belief and Sins of Unbelief," by St. George Mivart, in the *Nineteenth Century*, October 1888.

to find its realization. It was the ideality of a great aim, nurtured in youth, that nerved the late Emperor William in those weary years of struggle, and enabled him to organize his army and strike in at last with the popular longing for unity. It was this trait in his character that enabled him to feel its echo in the hearts of the nation, and to build up the national edifice.

But, whilst dwelling on the results achieved in the present day, it is but just to refer to that high-mindedness, even among German politicians of the past, that did so much to make what has come to pass possible. In connection with this we cannot resist the temptation of translating a letter of General Gneisenau to his King, Frederick William III., in the year 1811:—

“In my saying this, your Majesty will again hold me guilty of poetry, and I will gladly own the impeachment. For religion, prayer, the love for our Sovereign, for our country, are nothing but poetry; no elevation of the heart without the sentiment of poetry.

“He who acts according to cool calculation must become a confirmed egotist.

“The safety of the throne is based on poetry. How many of us who look up with sadness to the tottering throne might find a happy and peaceful position in modest retirement, some even a life of luxury and ease, if, instead of feeling, he only wished to calculate. Any master would suit him equally well, but the ties of birth, of devotion, of gratitude, hatred against the foreign invaders, attach him to his old master; for his sake he will live or die, for his sake he resigns his family happiness, for his sake he will sacrifice life and property unto the uncertainty of hope.

"This is poetry; yes, even of the truest kind. Under its influence I will endeavour to buoy myself up as long as I live, and I will look upon it as an honour to belong to that enthusiastic band ready to surrender everything in order to regain all for your Majesty. For truly such a resolve must be born of an enthusiasm that scorns every selfish consideration. Many are there who think thus, and, conscious as I am of my incompetence in comparison, I will endeavour to act in their spirit."

Such is an instance of German poetic idealism. To it we owe some of the most sympathetic traits of character in modern German annals. It is notably present in some of the well-known friendships of great men: in the communion of minds ever so free from envy of Luther and Melanchthon, of Scharnhorst and Stein, of Blücher and Gneisenau. In letters, in Goethe and Schiller, the two Schlegels, the two Grimms; and in science, the two Humboldts. In our time, most glorious instance of all, in the Emperor William with his great paladins, Bismarck, von Roon, and Moltke.

It is this ideal Germany that gained the admiration, the enthusiasm, of Carlyle—the dreaminess of high-souled poetry allied to the moral and nervous strength for action.

IX.

If it be permissible to think that the English, by their love of sport, of outdoor exercise and games, by their cultivation of body generally, carry on the physical traditions of ancient Greece, so we may say the Germans in some measure represent the Greek element in an intellectual as well as in an ethical sense.

An influence, if not directly derived from, yet distinctly akin to that of Greece, is traceable, not only in German thought, in literature, in the cultivation of the fine arts, but also in the general spiritual acceptance of life. It is embodied in the ethical and æsthetic feeling of the people. Even their language has many affinities with that of the Greeks, as is proved by their happy renderings of Homer, the Greek dramatists, &c. But if they offer us these affinities to the countrymen of Plato, the practical lesson of their literature and philosophy—self-renunciation in the delights of the ideal in the one, and Kant's "categorical imperative" in the other—will save them from the fate of the Greeks.

The educated classes are singularly free from religious bigotry, and, in fact, even outward forms of church worship are much less practised than in England. The Germans say, indeed, that in our Hebraism we are the chosen people—the direct successors of the ancient Jews. On the other hand, a greater amount of devotion or veneration is reserved for application to secular life. It shows itself in veneration for the fine arts, particularly for music and the drama, which are regarded in a far more earnest spirit than that of mere amusement; particularly the drama is felt to be a means of culture. On entering one of the many Court theatres we are struck by evidence of influences at work unknown elsewhere in our time. In fact, the Court theatres are beacon towers of æsthetic light in the present day. For even if the frivolous and worthless show their heads, the aim of these institutions is an elevating, and not a mercenary one.

Whereas with us the care of the theatres is left to speculators, who are controlled by a fossilized official, in Germany the office of Administrator of the Royal Theatres is almost akin to a subordinate Minister of Public Education.

One of the reigning German Dukes (Saxe-Meiningen) has devoted himself heart and soul to the stage, and even married an accomplished actress. Not that he has taken to the stage as a passing craze. Far from it. He has devoted himself to it in the true spirit of German ideality. He is his own manager, and even at times travels with his troupe, doughty man of war as he proved himself in 1870, and looking as he does every inch a soldier. The Duke has set his face against the "star" system, which was fast ruining unity of purpose in the drama, and the performances of the Meiningen troupe to-day are models of what the complete *ensemble* of a play should be. Not only that; he has devoted earnest historical research to the subject of costumes and "properties." Thus the pieces are not only mounted on a scale of luxury and magnificence, but above all with greatest possible fidelity in their historical aspects. In this way the influence of the Duke of Meiningen as a stage reformer has been already felt far and wide, and it is not too much to say that if an educated Englishman wishes to see the masterpieces of Shakspeare adequately rendered, he had better leave his native shores and take a railway ticket to the pretty little Thuringian town of Meiningen.

Not that the excellence of this model stage of Meiningen stands alone. Side by side with an increasing materialism in the drama and love of the frivolous and

sensational of late years, it is still possible to witness the masterpieces of the classics of all countries in many towns in Germany.

Only lately the dramatic poet Wilbrandt devoted his term of administration of the Vienna Imperial Burg-theater to the production of the masterpieces of Spanish and Portuguese literature. From thence the works of Lopez de Vega, Calderon, Camoens, and others made their way to other theatres all over the country. And from other sources the same can be said of the works of the Skandinavian poets, Henrik Ibsen and Björnson.

X.

It is this culture—this truly classic sentiment—that is fostered from the stage that is reflected in literature and manifests itself in every walk of German life. It often strikes us as revealing a relationship to an ethical creed of its own. It tends to strengthen those feelings of veneration for the best and highest which is so large a part of every sense of religion—the love of the beautiful of the Greeks allied to the true ethical feeling of Christianity. Its result is the so-called “*Gemüthsleben*” of the Germans, an untranslatable term which signifies “the life of heart and mind combined.” In its manifestation it tells us that whatever individual coarseness of manner and feeling is to be found in the Fatherland—and there is enough of it—there yet dwells a spirit in their midst the possession of which other nations might well envy.

The sentiment of piety which we are accustomed only to seek for within the walls of churches we find present in the every-day life of the nation. That which

finds no scope in dogmatic casuistry seeks an outlet in events of public and private life.

The public festivals of the nation have something truly ethical in their character. The celebrations of important national events have a grace and dignity peculiar to them; the commemorations of great victories have nothing boastful or vain-glorious in their character.*

When war was declared in 1870, the inhabitants of Berlin in their thousands sang patriotic songs and cheered in front of the palace of their King, who came to the historical corner window again and again to acknowledge their greetings. At last one of his officers came out and said to the people, "Children, the King must work with his staff right through the night, and begs you will go home now, so that he may be undisturbed." And, as if by magic, the whole vast place was deserted.

Then, again, who that had the good fortune to witness in 1871 the triumphal return of the troops can ever forget a scene as impressive as it was free from every element of vain-gloriousness and vulgarity.

When the old Emperor died, and shortly afterwards his noble son, were not all, poor and rich alike, admitted to look at them in death once more? And what a lesson their conduct conveyed!

Such incidents are instructive as showing us the instincts of heart and mind of a people. In fact, it is

* We hear, though we cannot believe, that it is the intention of the present Emperor to discountenance the further annual celebration of the victory of Sedan. All those who have witnessed the harmless, simple character of its celebration—for it is mainly a school festival—could only regret such a decision.

almost necessary for a foreigner to have seen one of the great national manifestations of feeling, such as the above, in order to understand the spirit that dwells beneath the rough outer surface.

Although some of the annual church festivals, such as Easter, Whitsuntide, Christmas, no longer appeal in their ecclesiastical character as of old, yet they are kept either in the form of a family festival, such as Christmas, or in the open air in their relationship to the re-awakening of Nature, as in the case of Easter and Whitsuntide. At Easter and Whitsuntide the people swarm out into the green fields, not to drink and run riot, but instinctively to worship God in the contemplation of His works, so beautifully described by Goethe in the first part of "Faust." The Germans are lovers of Nature in a sense that is perhaps only met with among the Japanese, who have special festivals all the year round whenever certain flowers are in blossom—the cherry, the plum, the iris, the chrysanthemum, and the sacred lotus: it is part of their religion.

In the care the Germans bestow on the graves of their dead, and in their affectionate reverence, they stand pre-eminent, particularly evidenced by the beautiful monuments erected all over the Fatherland in memory of their brethren fallen in battle. He who could gaze on the monument on the Niederwald in commemoration of 1870-71 without feeling a thrill of piety can possess little *Gemüth*, little sense of the ideal, to whatever nation he belongeth. The German words for cemetery—*Friedhof*, "The court of peace," *Gottesacker*, "God's acre"—breathe an ideal sentiment peculiar to the nation. Even in familiarly speaking of the dead,

the German word *selig*, "resting in God," has a charm of its own.

In this as in many other ways the Germans remind us of the ancient Greeks, whereas with us we can only regard the neglect of our own graves in the Crimea and at Waterloo with a feeling of shame.

That eminent Scotch thinker, Fletcher of Saltoun, once said, "If I may make the songs of a people, let who will make the laws." And no wonder, for it is far easier to promulgate fifty laws than to make one song that shall reach the heart of the people and reflect its best aspirations. And the best instincts of the German people are embodied in their songs: their ideality, their patriotism, their love of the beautiful, their intense love of Nature, and even indirectly their very history, all are reflected in their "Volkslieder"—the harmonious blending of poetry and song. A "Volkslied," as distinct from an evanescent popular ditty, is not *made* in the ordinary meaning of the word; it is created; its origin is divine. It is divine in the sense that it owes its origin to that supernatural instinct in us which belies our meaner nature, and bids us feel that there is something higher, something spiritual, in store for us.

XI.

Germany is the country of the inimitable "Volkslied," the home of musicians and composers, and yet it was a celebrated German author, Karl Gutzkow, who penned the following:—"In fact, what is music to us, these mathematics of sound? In great musicians I have always found people who, although conversant

with keys, can solve nothing for us. If listening to music influences me to believe in the immortality of the soul, it may influence others at the same time to take an opposite view. No; music will cease to belong to the highest arts. Does it not already in the opera approach more and more to mere declamation?”

The following remark of Hermann Presber, the novel-writer, is even more scathing:—“Sound [*der Ton*] is the vibrating soul. But vibrating souls are mostly devoid of intellect. Music is the only art in which, side by side with talent, stupidity gets on cheerfully, and may even assert itself with arrogance. Yes, yes! Music is the most social and sociable of the arts. It is only a question who is able to feel at home long in purely musical society? Only give an individual the high C and the low C, and he, like Philip of Macedon’s gold-laden ass, will soon penetrate every town and every boudoir.”

Strange words these to us who are accustomed to believe that a want of the appreciation of music betokens a want of heart. But in some things we are childlike enthusiasts compared to the Germans, particularly as critics. For they, even when carried away, are too apt to stop and inquire into the psychical causes of their emotion.

Thus, not against music itself, but against the excess of its cultivation, to the exclusion of more important matters, many sober thinkers in Germany* have been raising their voices of late. They are of opinion that excellent as undoubtedly is the influence of music

* In France similar expressions of opinion are to be found—viz., “*Contre la Musique*,” par Victor de Laprade (1881).

in itself, its excess is often injurious, and is indulged in at the expense of the development of reading, sound thinking, and above all of high-mindedness. They know by daily experience that a man may be an excellent musician, and yet, in every other particular, a fool. More than that, they see that the kingdom of Saxony, the home of music *par excellence*, is also the head-quarters of the German Philistine and of their dread spectre Social Democracy. In Austria the music-gifted Bohemians are on a very low level of morality and education; and in Vienna, where Beethoven and Schubert lived and died, the cultivation of music has not, according to all accounts, increased the logical powers or the moral perceptions of its good inhabitants.

Music is of all arts the one that appeals most exclusively to the senses, and, except in the case of its higher walks, it can scarcely be said to be to the ethical advantage of the community.

Its excess is distinctly baneful to the mental development of a nation. In Hungary, for instance, the cultivation of music goes hand in hand with the idleness which that pleasure-loving people are noted for. Thus it is not surprising to find that great and petty despots have ever encouraged it, for music kept their subjects away from serious thinking. Music has ever been the favourite art of oppressed nationalities. It may be a civilizing element—a tamer of the savage breast—in a low order of things; but it is often cultivated in an advanced community to the neglect of more important matter.

The record of the lives of great musicians shows a strange medley of eccentricity and of the dominant

effects of an undue excitability of the nervous system. Also great composers, with few exceptions, are remarkably short-lived. Liszt, Verdi, and Rossini are the exceptions among a list that includes such instances of short-lived men as Mozart, Schubert, Weber, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Chopin, and even Schumann, whose life was one constant misery of nervous depression.

In Germany to-day musicians are more or less a class by themselves, and a very peculiar *genus irritabile* they often represent. For if even creative musical genius shows a sad record of mental peculiarity, it is not surprising that mere executants are remarkable for many petty manifestations of an ill-balanced nervous system.

XII.

Germany is now suffering from a plethora of music and musicians,* and yet one of its noblest specialities, the "oratorio,"** and one of the most complete musical instruments, the organ, are much less cultivated than with us. Against that, however, may well be put the beautiful church music of the Catholics and the impressive vocal chorals of Protestant churches. Also the "Volkslied"—that unique manifestation of the national love for poetry and music combined, already referred to—may be classified as one of the highest and most precious forms of music in Germany.

* Although those instruments of torture—street bands and organs—are fortunately prohibited.

** Germany does not possess any musical institutions like the Handel Choir, the Bristol Musical Festival Society, or those of Worcester and Birmingham.

Next to these forms of music that touch the chord of national life must be classified the splendid and cheap orchestral concerts, of violin quartetts, male chorus unions, for their excellence and wide diffusion are beyond comparison with those of any other country. Also the operas of Richard Wagner have become distinctly national, and as such may well be said to belong fittingly to the period of national re-awakening in our time. The operas of Wagner strike a strong patriotic Teutonic key, and thus their continued performance at Bayreuth is wisely encouraged by the Emperor. Wagner's standard operas fill the theatres from stalls to gallery all over the country wherever operatic music is heard.

It is not these noble forms of music themselves that pique the critical pessimist—they are a precious heirloom of national genius; it is the over-addiction of the masses to fritter away their time and to dull their energies for thought in running after every form of music, and also the dreadful mania for pianoforte-playing that exists in Germany. It has been well pointed out that the pleasure-loving South of Germany (including Austria) has produced its great musicians, whereas the North must be credited with its thinkers.* The piano-playing mania, however, extends from the North Sea down to the Alps; it is universal and omnipresent.

In Weimar it is forbidden to play the piano with the window open, under a penalty of two marks. And

* It is strange to note the great number of hard thinkers that hail from the North-east of Prussia—Im. Kant, and Schopenhauer, also Copernicus and Kepler; whereas Germany's greatest poets, except Heine, almost all hail from the South. Schiller, Goethe, Uhland, Victor von Scheffel, were born in the South of Germany.

no wonder, for in German towns every floor of a house harbours at least one family and at least one piano, not to mention stringed instruments of torture.

The excellent German musical academies (*Musik-conservatorien*) were originally designed to train musicians for the orchestra, the piano-playing being looked upon as a secondary branch of the musical profession. This intention has been partly frustrated of late, as we find on comparing the numbers of students of the piano with those of other instruments. Thus at the academy in Vienna in the year 1880 there were 400 pupils in piano-playing, and of these 350 were girls, most of whom were presumably let loose on the community as piano masters and mistresses! It is this advent of the female element that has particularly contributed to the present craze of piano-playing. It has conquered the profession of music in Germany, as with us novel-writing has come to assert its sway.

Yet even in music, the art in which the mind leans over to ungraspable sentiment and lends expression to the emotions in greater measure than to the intellectual faculties, we have but to glance at the prose writings of Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner in order to note dissatisfaction with the whole method of musical expression and aim of the time. We observe that restless and yet ideal striving for something higher, something truer, as the motive-power that nerved the efforts of these two monarchs of the realms of sound. Wagner's theatre at Bayreuth, built expressly for the performance of his musical dramas, was the last and outward embodiment of an instinct that led him to seek the most congenial forms in the models of ancient Greece. His

genius ransacked the folklore of Scandinavia, the history and the myths of the Middle Ages, only to find its last spiritual expression in the legends of early Christianity, "Parsifal."

The great past supplies us with a splendid record of German ideal striving in music. From Bach's Passion-music to Handel's oratorios, the idealization of Christianity is the golden thread that runs through their work. Mozart, the creator of the German opera; the most ideally creative of almighty Beethoven, who, on being told that one of his combinations of harmony was not allowable, replied, "I allow it!"

CHAPTER III.

EDUCATIONAL.

Now 'tis the spring, and weeds are shallow rooted;
Suffer them now, and they'll o'ergrow the garden,
And choke the herbs for want of husbandry.

SHAKESPEARE.

I.

IF the schools are the cradle, the universities are the training-ground of intellectual life in Germany more even than elsewhere. There the national ideals have slumbered on through times of devastating war and misery, in order to awake to new life with the returning sunshine of peace.

The German universities have at all times cherished the idea of national unity and kept it alive when it had been lost sight of almost everywhere else. In fact, they have supplied the impulse that has kept the current of patriotism healthily circulated when without

them stagnation and indifference might have prevailed. This great fact must be borne in mind as a set-off against some of the sad political pedantry of German Professors.

Thus, Bismarck's partiality for the universities is only natural; when, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, deputations from nineteen universities greeted him with enthusiasm, he replied "I will gladly die, now that I see this flower of youth before me."

The realization of the German Empire has given an extraordinary impulse to university life, and to-day it can be said with more truth than ever that Germany is the classic land of universities. Elsewhere may be found special schools and academies that present exceptional features of excellence, but nowhere can universities be found similar to hers.

There are twenty-two universities in the German Empire, of which eleven fall to Prussia proper. These twenty-two universities are so many active centres of knowledge, and include a staff of two thousand professors and of over twenty-eight thousand students.

The following remarks on the spirit that pervades the German universities of to-day, by a French Catholic priest who studied at Leipzig in 1882, seem to carry more weight than anything we could say, as they are those of a witness not likely to be biased in their favour: *—

"In order to become acquainted with the soul [*l'âme—der Geist*] of Germany it is necessary to see that community in its daily life—that is, attracted to

* "*Les Allemands.*" Par Le Père Didon. Paris: Calmann Lévy. 1884.

the university—from every class of the nation. Here they meet in absolute fraternal equality. The common devotion to knowledge, without destroying the distinction of birth and fortune, yet creates above them a higher unity, where the most intelligent and laborious take the first place. . . .”

Then again:—

“It is only possible to understand the high civilizing power of the universities in Germany when we have gained a full picture of the curriculum of instruction followed out there.

“The course of instruction embraces the universality of science; it extends to the limits of human knowledge. . . . Theology and philosophy, metaphysics and the positive sciences, their systems and their facts, doctrine and history, literature and languages, everything is included in its essentially encyclopædic domain. More than that, certain arts the exercise of which presuppose talent of a high order, such as painting, sculpture, architecture, music, the science of agriculture, the art of war, are all comprised in this limitless domain of superior instruction. In truth, this world in itself contains everything that is necessary to cultivate the human brain.

“It must be frankly admitted that, among no people in the world, even among the most intelligent and best educated, is the universality of knowledge cultivated as in Germany. . . . Nowhere do universities so thoroughly justify their tradition of centuries, their great name of Alma Mater. . . . In examining the intellectual life of Germany the twenty-two universities of the Empire appear as the culminating-points of its scientific organiza-

tion. These twenty-two summits form, in the region of intellect, the high chain of mountains which govern the plain from afar, and from whose heights the supply of modern thought and knowledge runs like limpid crystal through endless channels to within the reach of all."

II.

But every result has to be paid for, and the same as we see the culture of music leading to its excess, so the price Germany pays for its extended university system may be said to consist in an annually increasing contingent of intellectual proletariat to be found in the country. This increase is even attracting the notice of German public opinion. Lawyers without practice, doctors without patients, men of science without pupils—all these elements find no scope in practical life, and go to swell the army of poverty and blighted hopes.

What she owes to her splendid system of school education is so well known that it may seem superfluous to recapitulate it here. On the other hand, it may be useful to point to a few of its peculiarities, if only to warn us from accepting it blindly as a model, which we seem at times only too much inclined to do.

Amidst all the nebulous theories of speculative philosophy that raise the smile of foreigners, it remains a fact that the German people have carried more philosophy into every-day life than any other nation. Unconsciously, the categorical imperative of Kant, "Duty," forms the basis of Germany's intellectual character and action. For if we at most produce *individuals* above the vulgar race for wealth, the Germans produce *whole classes* whose aims are entirely distinct from money-

making, and the most prominent class is that of the German schoolmaster.

It is true that before 1866 the English type of the speculative schoolmaster had sprung up in Germany, but the rigid Prussian educational test requirements for military service soon put an end to amateur educationalism as a means of making a fortune. Whereas our schoolmasters are nothing if not speculative money-makers, the German pedagogue is as poor as a church mouse, but devoted to his work heart and soul. It is impossible to find his equal elsewhere in the world.

But the opinion is gradually gaining ground that he is grinding the youth of the country to powder, and that it is time to put the break on. The very high school qualifications required to pass the examination for the one-year service in the army are drilled into the boys at such an early age as almost to put too great a strain on their physical system. These tests have become more severe of late, as well as the complicated examinations that have to be passed in order to obtain any civil or military appointment later on.

But we are chiefly concerned with the enormous strain put on boys during their younger years, and of that it may be said it is so excessive as, in many instances, to affect them physically and stunt their growth intellectually.

A German paper says:—

“The over-burdening of our youth with school-work is again the subject of wide discussion with our pedagogues, as well as with those other philanthropists who are anxious for the welfare of our youth. We

have collected a few opinions of authorities on the subject, which we append:

"Our monopolized gymnasium,* with its devotion to the dead languages and their grammar, has brought us to such a pass that we—the so-called best educated classes—are strangers in our own century, unable to free ourselves from a dead and abstract world amidst which we have passed our youth in order to obtain certain examinatory qualifications. It is questionable whether we are ever able to free ourselves from the consequences, let alone the bodily and ethical damage done to us by this enforced torture.

"HARTWIG.**

"DÜSSELDORF, *May* 1886.

"We seem to have forgotten too readily that the word gymnasium originally means a place set apart for athletic exercise.

"LOTHAR BUCHER.***

"BERLIN, *May* 1886.

"Schools ought to be fitted to the requirements of humanity.

"OPPOLZER.

"VIENNA, *June* 1886.

"The gymnasium with its two dead languages can-

* The German term for schools in which the usual classical curriculum is followed.

** A well-known German philologist.

*** Privy-Councillor Lothar Bucher, up till lately Bismarck's right-hand man in the Foreign Office.

not last; the only alternative is to drop either Greek or Latin.

"EDUARD V. HARTMANN.*

"GR. LICHTERFELDE, *May* 1886.

"I accuse our schools of unfair competition, for they only bring out two-legged encyclopædias.

"HERMANN J. MEYER.**

"*July* 13, 1886.

"True culture does not consist of dead knowledge and hollow tests of memory, but in the true development of the heart and of the reasoning faculties of the brain.

"ERNST HAECKEL.***

"JENA, *June* 1886.

"An excess of heterogeneous knowledge weakens our senses and lames our will.

"WILLIAM JORDAN.†

"FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN, *July* 1886.

"Those who look after the condition of light and fresh air in our schools, when they see that the number of diseased eyes and lungs does not decline, forget that in numberless cases the bad air and bad light at home in the evenings undo all the good of light airy schoolrooms. Therefore, reduce the amount of work to be done at home in the evening. There it is. Teach in school, but give youth its freedom at home.

"J. REULEAUX.††

"BERLIN, *May* 28, 1886."

* The best known of living German philosophers.

** Compiler of the best known German Encyclopædia.

*** Professor of Natural Sciences at Jena; well-known Darwinian.

† Philologist and poet of reputation.

†† Privy Councillor and member of the Prussian Chamber of Commerce.

It is, however, only fair to add that a number of Professors of the University of Heidelberg have recently signed a declaration to the effect that they do not believe in the evil consequences of the present system of school education.

Yet there can be no doubt that one of its outcomes is a large amount of so-called *Halbbildung* (half-education), which carries imperfectly digested theories into the community and tends to swell the ranks of the Social Democrats.

Besides, a large amount of this burdensome school knowledge is utterly lost and thrown away in after-life by those who have been forced to attain it in order to pass the one-year-service examination for the army, and the ambition to do so is found down to the humblest walks of life. Then, again, the leaning towards intellectual knowledge too often dies away in the practical battle of life, and thus we find a great amount of stunted intellect in the country—those who have not been able to realize the promise of their school-days.

One definite omission we are convinced they ought to supply, and this is a greater study of political economy and of political science. These are the things that, percolating the masses through the younger generations, will do more to form the judgment of the people, and produce a well-balanced popular opinion, than the newspapers.

III.

There are other points that call for remark. In the strain of over-study the cultivation of character is neglected.

The masters are so engrossed with the intellectual progress of their pupils that they have little attention left to bestow on the development of their character, a point far more seen to even in our "good-for-nothing-else" schools. The German masters are excellent instructors (*Lehrer*), but rarely educators (*Erzieher*). One of the causes of this is that the German boys do not pass so much of their free time—of which they have very little—in the company of the master as in England. If English boys spend too much of their time in play, the German boys spend too little.* And this is to be deplored for two reasons: the first is that outdoor games are so necessary for the bodily health and development of youth; the second, that it is principally by the companionship and joining in the games of their pupils that English schoolmasters are able to exercise a healthy influence on the character of their charges.

The German pedagogues prematurely develop the brain at the expense of the physique, and without enough attention to the character; the English pedagogues develop the character and the physique to the neglect of the brain.

A comparison of the outward appearance of a class of English and German school-boys, say between the ages of twelve and fifteen, will at once strike an observer, and would prove the best answer to the recent declaration of the Heidelberg Professors. The English boys look far healthier and more active, and their

* This is undergoing a change for the better of late; not only in schools, but among the population at large, outdoor recreative exercise is on the increase.

manners are much more easy and engaging, than those of the latter.

Further, we have no hesitation in saying that, admitting that the schoolroom knowledge of a German youth of twenty is, on an average, far above that of the English lad of the same age, it is by no means certain that the same holds good when they are both forty or fifty.

On the contrary, from our observation we should say that as they grow older the intellectual attainments of the two tend to equalize, and, when they come to the prime of life, the Englishman, whose life is generally more active and practical, is quite on a par in intellectual power with the better educated German. And from fifty upwards we are even inclined to think the German goes stale sooner than the Englishman. And if such be the case, it must be owing to the English on an average leading a more healthy life, for where the Germans do lead a healthy outdoor life we see the phenomenal vitality of their military commanders.

German education forces too much at too early an age not often to affect the elasticity of the brain later on in life, unless it is made up for by the healthiness of later life, as in the army.

Besides those already noted, there are other distinct contrasts between English and German school systems. The English master devotes all his attention to the most gifted and diligent boys, neglecting the less intelligent ones, for it is important for him to get known through the success of his pupils at examinations in order to secure further patronage. German masters devote themselves equally to the instruction of all with-

out money interest, and also without holding forth prizes as an incentive. Prizes and scholarships are almost unknown in German schools as well as in university life.

As German boys hardly play any outdoor games, compared with English boys, so also those friendships among themselves, which in England so often last through after-life, are comparatively rare. As stated above, the system does not tend to bring out the character, but, on the contrary, rather to subdue and suppress the natural effervescence of youth. On the other hand, one cause of vitiating character in England, *the* one English school vice, is unknown in Germany—viz., toadyism, inculcated by parents themselves in sending boys to school merely to pick up connections to help them on in after-life.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that prizes and scholarships as incentives are unknown both at German schools and universities. The astonishing results of German education are gained without even appealing to the instincts of rivalry or competition: a most instructive fact! The sense of duty attains here single-handed a result, which with us has to be brought about by rivalry and the hope of reward.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRUSSIAN MONARCHY.

The Sovereign is the Sovereign of all. The proper leader of the people is the individual who sits on the throne.—LORD BEACONSFIELD.

I.

WE who have gained our liberties by centuries of struggle against the pretensions of the Crown are loth to admit the advantages of a strong monarchy, even if we are not instinctively suspicious of it. Yet who can say, supposing that, instead of the Stuarts, we had been ruled by a royal house of the stamp of the Hohenzollerns—who can say that the monarchy might not be as powerful in England to-day as we find it in Prussia?

If the elective monarchy of old made possible the Thirty Years' War, that brought down Germany from its position of the first power of Europe to a waste desert inhabited by hardly five millions of half-starving human beings, the stability of the House of Hohenzollern has proved the salvation of Germany in our time. What we should deem a curse for ourselves has turned out a blessing for Germany, and what we should have thought likely to benefit the Germans—namely, our own parliamentary institutions—would in all probability have proved powerless to help them.

From the first Burggrave of Nürnberg, who bought the margravate of Brandenburg from the impecunious Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund, down to the Prussian rulers of our day, the family of Hohenzollern supplies

us with an extraordinary instance of the descent of certain qualities from father to son.

Of Suabian origin—and Suabia is the traditional home of canniness and thrift—the Hohenzollerns have almost all been distinguished by the possession of these useful qualities, allied to strong common-sense, which prevented them from turning to diseased niggardliness. On the contrary, the characteristics of the Suabian family only seem to have hardened in a Northern soil until they burst forth in the full effulgence of genius in Frederick the Great. By a strange freak of fortune, even the one Hohenzollern of a long line of rulers who formed an exception to the family characteristic of closeness in money matters benefited his country by his extravagant vanity. For he it was—Frederick I.—who, again profiting by the impecuniousness of the Emperor Leopold, gained the title of King of Prussia, if he did not even do a little bribery in the affair, and thus attained that recognition for his country which his successors so well took advantage of. Yet even in this particular the Hohenzollerns show to advantage compared with other German Sovereigns, who almost all owe their present titles to having sided with the French against their own countrymen.

Thus we have in this extraordinary family hardly a single ruler who did not in one way or other add his mite to the foundation of Prussian power.

II.

To understand the position of the Hohenzollerns of to-day it is useful to look at the past, and, before referring to their doings, just cast a passing glance at

the negative merit of what they refrained from doing. Allowing for the times they lived in, it will be found that, man for man, from the days of the Great Elector down to our own time, they have been individually far superior to their *confrères* on the German thrones.

Whilst the ruler of the one German State that could have made itself the head of Protestant Germany—Saxony—was missing his political opportunities, King Frederick William I. was quietly drilling his soldiers, filling the national coffers, and organizing a model administration in every department of the State. The amiable Guelphs just called to rule over the English were indulging their favourite tastes, cursing the English, making themselves hated, and thus consolidating the power of the English aristocracy. At that very time the Duke of Würtemberg was ruining the country by his extravagant imitation of French Court life and immorality. Later on, when Frederick the Great was consolidating the fruits of his victories, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel was amassing a private fortune of forty million dollars by selling his subjects to England to be employed in coercing the American colonists.

But the coarse vagaries of the Guelphs in Hanover, the splendid extravagancies of the Courts of Würtemberg, Bavaria, Hesse and Saxony, are only interesting as they enable us to see how the Hohenzollerns managed to wade through the rottenness of the times and remain, on the whole, unsoiled. For their record, side by side with such, is a comparatively clean one.

But freedom from rascality is only an indication of a superiority the Hohenzollerns invariably possessed and showed by their actions. They have proved true

to the motto of the greatest of them all, that the King is the first servant of the State. They have ever set their ambition to work out the development and welfare of the entire nation instead of that of a class. The humblest have felt it to be so, as is proved by the celebrated answer of the miller to Frederick the Great, who, when the King threatened to expropriate him unjustly, replied, "There are still judges in Berlin, your Majesty!" Can we imagine a French miller threatening Louis XV. with a judge?

To be a monarchy of the poor is even to-day the boast of the Hohenzollerns. Against the pretensions of the aristocracy they have always sided with the rising citizen class, however much personal ties may have bound them to the nobility. Whenever the vital interests of the people have been at stake the Prussian monarchs have seen that justice was done. And it is perhaps indirectly owing to this distinction that the Prussians and their rulers have ever been most cordially hated by certain elements in politics. Particularly, those of doubtful moral standing have ever been fiercest in their dislike to Prussia. In our time the Prussians have known no greater enemies than thosemorganatic ladies who infest the little Courts of Germany, and have wielded considerable political influence from time to time.

In the beginning of the last century the Hohenzollerns introduced obligatory education amidst the derision of foreigners, and gradually abolished mediæval serfdom. So also in our day we see them breaking entirely new and hitherto untrodden ground, introducing economic measures for the welfare of the masses.

It has ever been their supreme merit to recognize that a nation does not consist of a small minority of privileged persons, but rather that the meanest and the humblest have an equal call on the care and solicitude of the Sovereign.

In this traditional and truly royal acceptance of the duties of a monarch lies the secret of the Sovereign's power in Prussia. This it is that has enabled Prussia from time to time to bear the strain put upon the very existence of the State, and to face a world in arms!

The Hohenzollerns from the first have been the nurturers and educators of their people. It is they who have impressed their administration with that stamp of incorruptible rectitude, that iron sense of duty and care for the welfare of all classes of the community, so that one and all are ready to recognize now that military success has drawn the attention of the world to its causes. But long ago there were observers who needed not military success to quicken their perceptions, and one of them was the late Lord Lytton, who in 1840 declared that Prussia was the best governed country in the world.

III.

About the same time that our Charles II. was in receipt of a yearly bribe from Louis XIV. through the hands of a French courtesan, the Great Elector of Brandenburg, the victor of Fehrbellin, was offering shelter to the French Protestants whom the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had driven from their homes. He it was who, finding his country swarming with titled do-nothings, put a firm if despotic stop to gambling and

profligacy, and gathered the scions of the poor nobility to the standards of his victorious army. Such despotism has now and then done good service in history, and in this instance it laid the foundation of that devotion of the poor Prussian aristocracy to the throne and the army that has borne such splendid fruit in our time.

Frederick William I. found his kingdom not only impoverished by the extravagance of his predecessor, but still showing the traces of the devastation of a previous century of warfare. Whole districts were still untilled waste, and even as late as the eighteenth century the pest had fearfully devastated East Prussia. It was the King himself who by proclamations and patents attracted foreigners from Saxony and Würtemberg, from the Palatinate, from Switzerland, and Bohemia, and, together with the Protestants that were driven from Austria, turned them into industrious and contented citizens.

He cut canals, laid out high roads, caused heather land to be furrowed by the plough. He extended the postal system. Model farms and cattle-breeding establishments were fostered and encouraged, and the celebrated stud of Trakehnen, which was destined to improve the breed of horses all over the country, owed its existence to the solicitude of the King.

Frederick William was far more of a king of the poor than a "soldier king," which latter one-sided historians long declared him; the hardness and harshness for which he has been blamed were often necessary in his reforming work. The landed aristocracy rebelled when he sought to abolish the serfdom of the peasantry,

and he only succeeded in diminishing the unjust exactions of the landowners. When the petty nobility refused to pay a land-tax, and demanded that their grievance should be put before the Provincial Diet, he wrote the memorable words: "I shall gain my point, and plant the sovereignty of the Crown as firm as a rock of bronze, and let these gentry indulge in their windy talk in the Diet. We can afford to let people talk when we gain our point."

Compulsory education, the official system, and universal military service, which he introduced, have since become part of the flesh and blood of the nation.

IV.

It was Frederick the Great who, in the midst of the dogmatic and philosophic contentions of the time, quietly put it: "In my country everybody can secure his salvation in his own fashion." To him it was that one of his great territorial nobles, Count Schaffgotsch, wrote apologizing for having changed his religion. He explained how the acquisition of the estate of Schlackenwerth was bound up with the condition of his becoming a Catholic. Frederick, in his reply, dryly put it: "I have taken cognizance of your lordship's action, to which I have no objection. Many roads lead to heaven; your lordship has struck out on the road by Schlackenwerth. *Bon voyage!*"

In every department of political and social reform Frederick the Great took the initiative. He continued his father's work of creating a free and independent peasant class, particularly through his edict of 1764, which led the way to the total abolition of peasant

serfdom. He advanced capital to the peasant soil-cultivator, saw that whole districts were drained, laid the foundations of new villages, and gained arid tracts of land for the plough.

The reign of Frederick William III. was one of deep national misfortune and degradation. Still, the personal qualities of the King command our highest respect.

At a time when the pretensions of the aristocracy, particularly in the army, were an unbearable nuisance, the King promulgated the following Cabinet order:—"I have noticed with great displeasure that young officers in particular endeavour to take precedence of civilians. I shall see that the army is duly esteemed and recognized in its proper place at the seat of war, where it is called upon to risk life and limb in the defence of the country. Otherwise, no soldier, whatever his rank, is to dare to ill-treat even the humblest of my citizens, for it is they, and not I, who keep the army. In their service are the soldiers the command of whom is confided to me, and arrest, dismissal, and even the penalty of death await those who act in contravention to my orders."

The above is in the true Hohenzollern spirit of protecting the weak from the strong, and explains the attachment of the people to the King notwithstanding the trials Prussia underwent during his reign.

In his reign, too, domestic virtue, so sadly outraged by society at the time, gained a shining example in his own family. The divine figure of Queen Louisa stands out for all time as a model of a royal wife and mother. Has not the late Emperor William borne eloquent testi-

mony to the influence of that mother, who at all times was his guiding star?

When at last the turn of the tide came, and the wave of French invasion was hurled back to exhaust itself on a barren Atlantic island, then that rare gift of the Hohenzollern, the capacity of choosing the best advisers, shone out anew, and Stein and Scharnhorst helped to rebuild the shattered national edifice.

V.

To admit that, after 1815, a period of reaction set in that bade many patriots grow anxious for the prospects of their country is only to say that there are periods of dull apathy in the life of nations as well as in that of individuals.

But even during the reign of Frederick William IV., dimmed as it was by Prussia's abject political *rôle*, we can still trace that endeavour of the Crown to raise the culture and increase the happiness of the people.

Whilst an iron tyranny marked the administration of Austria, as well as of the minor German States, there was at least an earnest good-will on the part of Frederick William. The impetus he gave to science and philosophy, though perhaps not visibly productive at the time, has yet done its share in preparing the public mind for the great events that were to come hereafter. His romantic idealism, which in its aberration unselfishly and modestly looked up to an old intriguer like Metternich as an authority in the art of making a people happy—even this weakness prepared the ground for his successors; it proved a source of strength to them, for

it enabled them to see that only a struggle of life and death could unite Germany.

This and more we have witnessed in our time, and here again we find a Hohenzollern King at hand, the first to recognize the signs of the times, with almost supernatural instinct in the detection of merit, taking the foremost place in the onward march of events, and realizing the German dream of centuries of national unity and independence. For although without a Bismarck the Germany of to-day might have been, without the late Emperor William it could not be.

In him truly Germany produced a great character, a force often far more decisive in the shaping of destiny than all the arts of Machiavelli. And in his case the words of Goethe, that only men of eminence are capable of recognizing the truly great, find their fit application in the relationship of the Emperor to his paladins.

Brought up in the feudal ideas of a monarchy existing by the grace of God, he lived to discern the sterling character and strength of that people he had once contemptuously treated as populace. And that people in its turn learned to understand, to appreciate, and lastly to idolize the grand old warrior who amidst every additional lustre of his reign remained the same in God-fearing modesty and in his attachment to what he conceived to be his mission and his duty.* This enthusiasm of the people increased as the old hero exceeded

* History will not omit to note what was perhaps one of the noblest traits of his character, when in '70 the old King preferred to accept a diplomatic defeat—almost a personal humiliation—rather than inflict the misery of war on his people. We know now how difficult it was to bring him to subscribe to the words “Mobil—Krieg.”—*Vide* Emperor Frederick's Diary.

the age usually allotted to man; and when his ninetieth birthday came round it seemed as if the religious element had mingled with the loyalty of a nation before an historical figure the record of which cast fiction in the shade. On that day well might the German students, 2000 strong, bear torches in his honour, and halting before his palace windows cheer to the address of their leader: "His Majesty, our most gracious Kaiser, the victorious leader in numerous battles, the Unifier of Germany's princes and people, the father of his country, the custodian of the peace of Europe, the creator of a new ideal world—long may he live!"

The incidents of his death which followed so soon afterwards are still familiar to us all. We remember how, after calling in vain for his suffering son, "Fritz, lieber Fritz," almost the last words of the old warrior were a key-note to his entire life: "I have no time to be tired."

But let us give place to one with rare powers of judgment as well as opportunities of exercising them, and whose verdict, if that of a staunch patriot, is at least not that of a time-server—of a Saxon, and not of a Prussian*:

"The Emperor William I. reached the highest pinnacle of worldly fame gradually in one continual rising progress, showing himself equal to every new task as it came before him. The man who united Germany, and gave her for the first time for centuries the unsullied

* "Zwei Kaiser." By Heinrich von Treitschke, Professor of History in the University of Berlin. Vol. LXII. of *Preussische Jahrbücher* (Prussian Yearly Records).

joy of victory, has only sunk to rest to unite a whole people in sorrow round his grave.

"In the years during which the character of man is supposed to shape itself, his highest ambition could scarcely have exceeded the hope of commanding the troops of his father or of his brother. In these years he lived in retirement, sharing the views of Prussia's best intellect, that the Constitution of federal Germany was as unsatisfactory as the state of her west frontier, and that only a last decisive struggle could give the German nation independence. He held on to this hope, and saw clearly that only a strong Prussia would be able to break the pressure of powerful surrounding States, and fulfil the national destiny.

"Thus he became a soldier heart and soul, loved for his personal amiability, and feared for his severity in matters of discipline, which showed even the humblest subaltern that an exacting and stern eye was upon him. Others slightly mistook for useless play-soldiering what was in reality a deep political game.

"Public opinion indulged in Radical dreams; it went into ecstasies in brotherly enthusiasm for Poles and Frenchmen, and hoped for a millennium of peace. In its conceit it could not understand the rough military ardour and sense of duty of this Prussian prince in its bearing on the future of the country.

"In his opposition to organic changes in the Constitution he encountered all the hatred of party; he warned his brother that Parliament would abuse its power of granting taxation by weakening the army. His warnings were not heeded, and as he had before given up the love of his youth to the call of duty to the State

so now also he ceased all opposition when once the decision of the King his brother was taken. And like a knight of old he, as the first subject, took on his own shoulder all the unpopularity that threatened to discharge itself upon the Crown.

"The revolution broke out. A rabid hate, a storm of misconception, poured over his head and drove him into exile; only the army that knew him never wavered in its devotion, and at the bivouac fires in Schleswig-Holstein the soldiers sang:

"Prinz von Preussen, ritterlich und bieder,
Kehr zu Deinen Truppen wieder,
Heiss geliebter General.'"

And when he returned from the exile which he had accepted for his brother's sake, he honestly and unreservedly co-operated in the spirit of the new order of things.

"Years afterwards, the illness of Frederick William IV. put him at the head of affairs. Two years later the death of the King placed the crown on his head. After short days of popular joy and uncertain expectation, he had to feel the fitful character of popular favour and to begin that battle which, as heir to the throne, he had foreseen—the battle for his own work, the re-organization of the army. The hatred of party grew to such intensity as was only possible among the descendants of the sufferers by the Thirty Years' War; the German comic papers even represented this manly, true-hearted soldier's face as that of a tiger. The struggle reached

* Prince of Prussia, brave and true,
Return and cheer thy troops anew,
Much beloved general.

such a height that only the decisive power of military success could cut the knot, and prove the rights of the monarch.

“And these successes came in those memorable seven years which summed up the results of two centuries of Prussian history. Blow after blow all these questions found their solution, to the attainment of which the diplomacy of Prussia had worked for generations.

“The last of German boundaries in the North was torn from Scandinavian grasp; the battle of Sadowa secured what had been missed at Kolin,* the liberation of Germany from the hegemony of the House of Austria. Then at last, by a sequence of unrivalled victories, the coronation at Versailles set the seal on and exceeded what in days gone by the men of 1813 had fondly hoped for.

“Gratefully the Prussians recognized that their institutions were now more safeguarded than ever under a powerful Sovereign; for, immediately after the '66 war, the King, who had shown himself to be so thoroughly in the right, voluntarily offered atonement for the technical breach of the Constitution, and not a word of bitterness ever came to his lips to call up the differences of the past. The whole German people had for the first time gained the feeling of national pride and, in the joy of their new condition, forgotten the discord of centuries.

“Through all these wondrous events—events that might have intoxicated even the brain of the most

* Kolin, the severest defeat Frederick the Great sustained during the Seven Years' War at the hands of the Austrian commander, Field-Marshal Dan.

sober—King William comes before us unchanged in kindness, firmness, and modesty. He himself believed that only a short span would be granted him to see the first beginning of the new order of things. But it was ordained otherwise, and far more beneficially. Not only did he live to complete the legal groundwork of the new Empire, but to add to the stability of the edifice by the power of his individuality. At first the allied German princes only saw a diminution of their own power in the new order of things. But soon they learnt to regard it as an extra guarantee of their own rights; for one of their own number it was who wore the crown, and his fidelity was a bond of safety for all. Thus through the Emperor's doing, and even against the opinion expressed by Bismarck, it came to pass that the Bundesrath, which at first had been looked upon as the seed-bed of dissension, in a few short years became the most reliable guarantee of unity, whilst the Reichstag drifted into a helpless plaything of parties.

"The Emperor never possessed a confidant who advised him on every subject. With rare knowledge of mankind, he discovered the best men to advise and assist him. With the freedom from envy only belonging to a great heart, he left full scope to those he had tried, but each one, even Bismarck, only in his own department. He always remained Emperor, by whose hands alone were held all the threads of power.

"The highest happiness of his life came to him when, after having escaped assassination as if by miracle, he met the enemies of society with that generous imperial Message* which aimed at striking at the root of the

* The Message of February 1881 to the working classes.

fundamental evils of society in our time. Only since then the nation thoroughly realized what it possessed in its Emperor. A current of popular affection hereafter carried him along. Europe came to look upon the old warrior as the guardian of the peace of the world. At home the strong monarchical character of his government was confirmed year by year. The personal will of the Sovereign wielded its good right side by side with that of Parliament, and now with the warm approval of better informed public opinion. The Germans knew that their Emperor always did what was right and necessary, and in his simple unadorned language always 'said what was to be said,' as Goethe has it. Even in fields of effort for which he had originally no natural bent, his innate discernment soon found its bearings. How much the ideal work of the nation owes to him! Yet among artists and men of science he never distinguished an unworthy one."

VI.

We all remember how more than the hopes of one nation watched the sick bed of his dying son, as we all know how they were doomed to disappointment. The grave closed over the purest embodiment of what is noble in the German character, for Frederick retained the idealism of youth even in middle age. Had he lived, the world would have seen how far such a nature would have been able to reconcile the differences and antagonisms still latent in the Fatherland.

He was the hope of the advanced Liberals, not only in Germany, but beyond its borders. On the other hand, there are some, and by no means the least

high-minded, who inclined to the belief that his goodness might have been abused, his trust misplaced, and that he did not possess the hardness necessary to guide the national helm in troublous times. There are some who hold that a noble nature is not identical with a good and great ruler. It is no guarantee against one of the greatest dangers of Sovereigns—misplacing their confidence. A trivial matter in a private citizen, in a ruler it is often one of supreme national importance. Some critics point to the late Emperor William—in this respect—as almost of superhuman discernment, and compare him with the Emperor Frederick, who many are of opinion not only misplaced his confidence in a physician, but, of greater moment, misplaced his confidence in one, at least, to whom he confided his diary. Some, again, aver that the influence of the Empress his wife—so well intentioned—was not happy in this respect. Many think Germany is hardly ripe for that cosmopolitan breadth and generosity of view and sympathy that distinguished Frederick III.

Through his rare simplicity and affability of manner he gained the popular heart as none had done before him; but whether that kindliness of disposition, that earnest, almost feverish, desire for the welfare of all, would have enabled him to carry out his benevolent plans, none can tell. Some think that a man of his romantic bent would have strongly resented a misjudgment of his aims. That he was capable of strong, almost passionate, decision, the sudden dismissal of Herr von Puttkamer—the one noticeable act of his short reign—seems to prove.

His was essentially the generous temperament of

the romantic idealist; whether he would have shown the same unimpassioned front to opposition and misjudgment, the same greatness of character in forgiving it, as his great father, the world can never know. Had he lived, we believe his rule would have proved a bitter disappointment to some of those who foolishly tried to claim him as a partisan.

In many things the late Emperor reminds us of that noble and romantic Hohenstaufen, the Emperor Frederick II. Full of the most ideal and romantic yearnings, and himself of the highest cultivation of the mind, he lived to see his plans thwarted, and then to die of a broken heart.

Public opinion, which showed itself so ready to credit the late Emperor Frederick with every possible virtue, showed its usual hasty one-sidedness in meeting the advent of the present young Emperor with all sorts of doubts and fears. His education has fitted him for his position, and the examples of his grandfather and father are ever before his eyes. Everything reliable concerning him tends to prove that his is a character that may be trusted to benefit by such advantages.

Germany cannot yet afford to be cosmopolitan in sentiment. She wants a strong rallying-point, at all hazards, that will unite the nation and enable it to rise above meaner interests in moments of supreme peril.

If the Germany of to-day is in want of a thoroughly honest, high-minded man, with strong national sympathies, with a romantic love for the history of the people he is called to rule over, then surely the present Emperor will be found to exceed the expectations of his friends and to disappoint the fears of his critics.

Although the opinions of those entrusted with a prince's education are naturally not impartial, we yet think the following excerpt from the lately published essay on the character of the present young Emperor by his tutor, Dr. G. Hinzpeter, bears sufficient evidence of honesty to deserve notice:—

“One feeling only rules all his thought and action, nerves his efforts, and would bid him stake all. It is the feeling of duty, always the strongest and most effectual instinct of every member of his race. This it is that will always bid him, as the first servant of the State, place the weal of all above that of every individual, particularly above every personal interest, and at all times sacrifice his own comfort, his own advantage, even his own life, unhesitatingly to the welfare of his beloved country.”

It is certainly interesting and touching to learn that the young Emperor has publicly thanked his tutor for this estimate of his character, as well as Herr von Treitschke for the article quoted on p. 81.

Even a superficial glance at what the Hohenzollerns have been to their country bids us understand that the backbone of the Prussian nation is loth to pin its faith to foreign models of parliamentarism. It prefers its own monarchy, in which the Sovereign is not only the first servant of the State, but its true beacon-tower in victory as well as in adversity. Whilst Republicans consistently prefer to do without heaven-born authority, there may be some people who would prefer to live in a country where the fountain of grace is a high-minded monarch rather than the temporary chief of a parliamentary party. The loyal Prussians have more than an

excuse for preferring the co-operation of Parliament to its autocratic supremacy, as we have it.

They are justified in so doing. With them loyalty is not a middle-class myth, but a reality—notwithstanding Social Democracy—pulsating in the heart of the peasant, the educated classes, as well as in that of the noble next to the throne. And no wonder it is so, for during generations, whilst some royal families have done everything to extirpate such a feeling in their own countries, the Hohenzollerns have uniformly fostered and strengthened it.

From Frederick William I.—the creator of Prussia's official organization—down to the present day, this is ever strongly marked.

Whilst the German aristocracy still clings to its traditions of birth-privilege, the Hohenzollerns have bridged the old lines of demarcation, and striven to attract intellect and merit of every class within their circle. Authors, painters, and men of science—invariably the best of each class—are not patronized, but distinguished in a manner reminding us of the times of the Medici, and of Pope Julius II., who followed the sulking Michael Angelo to Bologna: "In the stead of your coming to us, you seem to have expected that we should attend upon you."

Even here we find an analogy in the visit of the late Emperor William to Bayreuth, although that ungrateful egotistical genius, Richard Wagner, showed himself anything but an appreciator of imperial favour.

Not only is every Prussian prince bound to learn a handicraft, as if to bring his sympathies within scope of the humblest, but the very poorest subjects have ever

been able to petition the Sovereign direct. Thus, loyalty is not a sentiment of vague attachment to an unknown, unseen lay-figure, but is distinctively personal. It shows itself, not in the gratification of vulgar curiosity—the hunting after a show; it is sunk deep in the heart as an impetus to strengthen patriotism and duty.

The action of the Hohenzollerns has strengthened the monarchical principle far beyond the borders of the Fatherland. We ourselves even are perhaps destined to feel its influence. Formerly a spark would have sufficed to burst up most of the German petty royal Courts. The Saxon monarchy was only saved in '49 by the Prussian guards sweeping the streets of Dresden with musketry. To-day the loyalty of the people of the petty principalities has become stronger under the guiding sun of Prussia. Formerly many of the best intellects of Germany were Democratic, if not Republican; to-day they are monarchical.

It is impossible to take leave of the Prussian royal family without a word of appreciation for one who, next to themselves, has perhaps of royal princes done most for the cause of German unity—namely, the ruling Grand Duke of Baden, the son-in-law of the late Emperor William. In him Germany possesses a truly high-minded prince. In the most Democratic State of Germany he is the most popular Sovereign. And fully he deserves to be so. He it was who, in '71, helped more than any one in the creation of the German Empire,* and gave the late half-crazy King of Bavaria the option of proposing the measure, determined to do so

* This assertion has since been amply proved by the publication of the late Emperor Frederick's diary.

himself in case of refusal. And but yesterday, again, at the accession of the present Emperor, it was he who, hastening to Berlin, gave the example that induced every ruling Sovereign of Germany to be present at the ceremony.

CHAPTER V.

PATERNAL GOVERNMENT.

For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best.

POPE.

I.

AMONG students of history, as well as of political science, two schools of thought stand at daggers drawn. The one would have us believe that every ripple of the tide in the affairs of man is the result of infinite, remote, collective, and at last overpowering influence; something like the cracking of the earth's crust when the gases in its bowels seek and find an outlet. Therefore, it is against all undue and premature initiative and interference of the State in the affairs of the community.

This is the thought underlying our national political organization of the present day, and, if human temperament may be brought into analogy with an intellectual conviction, it may safely be put down as a manifestation of the phlegmatic, unimaginative, negative disposition. It may be an unattractive creed to some, but our insular position has allowed us to become the nation we are whilst practising it. So far as we are concerned, well and good.

The other school leans on the past, on the lessons of the great epoch-making figures in history, those who were not so much children of their time as themselves part-creators of the events they directed. It pins its faith to a strong and high-minded monarchy, assisted by capable advisers, and working out its ruling mission by harmonizing a strong traditional State power with the just pretension of the present time. This school holds that parliamentary party government is unsuited to direct the destinies of a great nation; that the opinions of a majority offer no guarantee of its soundness.

II.

It has been said that we are never so thoroughly in the right that our opponents are wholly in the wrong. May it not be so with two opposing schools of political thought? May not both be right in much, whilst each bears distinct evidence of its peculiar shortcomings?

An aristocratic monarchy run to seed was the cause of the battle of Jena and the temporary effacement of Prussia from the map of Europe as a Great Power. The history of the decay of republics is equally suggestive.

The form of government which succeeds best in developing the central idea of the State, backed up by the best instincts and unselfish devotion of its subjects, is the best; and every form of government, except, perhaps, an elective monarchy, has from time to time succeeded in solving the problem, and high-minded men have always been the means of its solution. The first condition of every government is the purity of the

fountain-head. Every plan for the happiness of man suffers shipwreck when mean natures are allowed to influence its working. The United States does not owe its greatness merely to the chance of its being dubbed a republic. America is studded with rotten republics, but the United States owes its stability to the fact of its founders having been great characters sprung from one of the finest races of manhood in the world. Purified by a baptism of blood, they framed a great Constitution, which tended to bring out what was good in the people and to render impotent what was vile. This Constitution was suited to the Anglo-Saxon race.

But are not, after all, the natural conditions of a nation's existence the deciding factors in the choice of the means of its salvation? In other words, is not the race, the climate of a country, its geographical position, a greater factor than a chance Constitution? Is the continuity of England's national independence and progress not owing more to the above conditions than to any set political creed? Our political system may have suited our requirements, but the silver streak that separates us from the Continent fixed their character.

One of the reasons why some nations have an instinctive antipathy to a powerful executive is that they have never known any that was not at the same time thoroughly rotten and corrupt. Supposing the choice should lie between a vicious paternal government and a corrupt Parliament, it is natural to hesitate.

Thus, in our country we are brought up to look askance at State interference and, above all, at "grand-motherly legislation." Up to the present, circumstances have enabled us to feel that we were justified in doing

so, and Manchester theories may be all very well when there are no frontiers to guard, no external enemies to threaten. If, however, such be not the fortunate condition of a nation, and its whole destiny and policy are to be evolved from the free expression of public opinion, then the success of Louis XIV. dragonading the Palatinate, and the ease with which the left bank of the Rhine subsequently became French in sympathies, show us what to expect! High aims dwell only in the few high-strung natures, whatever their birth.

III.

One consideration we cannot shut our eyes to—namely, that no country can possibly formulate its laws and policy by the gradual irresistible expression of public opinion, unless the following *sine quâ non* conditions are existent, and allow a strong healthy public opinion to come into being:—

1. National independence.
2. Strong, healthy, national self-consciousness.
3. Final subordination of class interest to the welfare of the State.

Till lately Germany possessed neither of these three indispensable qualifications, and without them it was useless to talk of a nation's public opinion. The want of them not only caused the dismemberment of the old German Empire and made Germany the battle-field of Europe for two centuries, but precluded the possibility of a public opinion coming into existence that could have materially helped to produce them. They had to be created against the machinations of old and powerful enemies at home and abroad. If France had under-

stood her true policy, German unity never would have been accomplished. Thus, the three necessary qualities of national life had to be conquered, and genius alone could hold aloft the banner round which those could congregate who were resolved to do or die in their attainment. Elements had to be called upon ready to shed blood—their own and their enemies’.

The wealthy middle classes of to-day, for instance, are distinctly averse to blood-letting. And yet in time and season there is no cement like blood! Even the history of the greatest republic of our time—the United States, a country the practical philanthropy of which none can deny—absolutely proves that.

Thus the Germans shed blood—rivers of it—and attained national independence! But even now they only hold it by the power of the sword; for national consciousness has not yet had time to harden, and the feeling of subordination of class interests is still very sickly, as also the feeling of patriotism in sundry places. Yet they can only hope to retain what they have gained, by strengthening those qualities that are still unreliable. Hence the straining of every nerve by their rulers to attain that end, and paternal government, based on the co-operation of all, is the means to that end.

IV.

A strong, healthy public opinion, born of a long and prosperous education, that might dispense with paternal government and work out its own will unfettered, does not, and cannot, exist as yet. Among other things, the small interest shown at elections proves this. For the Social Democrats are at present the most

earnest political party in Germany, judging by polling results. It should also be remembered that there public opinion was never intended to rule directly, as it does with us; at most only indirectly, by entrusting men of mark with the direction of affairs. When public opinion has no longer the "touch" to recognize such, it is time for it to give way, and allow something healthier to take its place.

Yet, notwithstanding that what has been gained is distinctly traceable to the action of genius guiding the sword, there is still a strong party in Germany that believes in English political methods. They would fain see our principles adopted, and prophesy all sorts of evil from their non-acceptance. Their adherents fail to see that their countrymen had no choice; they had either to accept salvation the way it came, or go on in the hopeless helplessness of the past!

The Germans had no independent leisure to work out their political and economical life according to *laissez-faire* principles. They could not afford to ask themselves whether great men come too rarely to entrust one, when he does appear, with powers that "might" descend to reckless or unworthy wielders. The circumstances of the country's existence left them no choice but to be thankful when light did appear.

It was individual genius that burst the shutters of mediæval darkness, and hailed the dawn of a new era, when Luther uttered those memorable words at Worms: "Hier steh' ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott helfe mir. Amen!"* It was the lack of national consciousness, the want of national independence and of the

* Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen!

due subordination of petty ruling interests, that robbed the German nation of the first-fruits of what has since become the common property of mankind. It was the possession of those requisites in England that enabled us to hold up the standard of the Reformation against the Catholic power of Spain.

Again, in our time we see national genius in Germany, having achieved independence, striving honestly to attain national well-being and endeavouring to strengthen the sentiment of national consciousness. It asks all classes alike to co-operate in the work of national greatness. No country was in such need of great men, and in few countries hitherto have the masses been so unable to realize the imperious necessity of their advent.

Whereas there is not an Italian living that does not mourn the death of Cavour, there are yet many men in Germany who would welcome the death of Bismarck!

V.

To judge the atmospherical conditions of a room full of people, you must come in from the open air, and you will soon notice in how far they differ from natural ones. A nation's civilization is like artificial temperature: you must gauge it from outside; you must compare it.

Is Germany's greatness a plant of recent and tender growth that requires constant care in order to enable it to develop in the future and stand on its own merits, a bulwark of civilization in Europe? We think it is.

Are those who are responsible for its destinies con-

scious of the difficulties of the task before them, and honestly intent on meeting them and doing their best in the best available manner in that direction? We feel convinced that they are, and we will endeavour to point out in how far we can show reason for believing this.

One of the reasons the French so easily gained popularity on the left bank of the Rhine at the beginning of the century was, that they represented a young, healthy, popular principle and the Germans an old, antiquated, feudal system.

The principal reason why the Alsacians so soon lost the old ties with the German Empire (for Strassburg was treacherously seized upon by Louis XIV. in the midst of peace) and still partially cling to France was, that they grew into the traditions of the powerful State they joined, and left none of a sterling nature behind to deplore the loss of. The old German Empire was effete, if not rotten to the core, and when the French Revolution came it found the Alsacians belonging to a nation that proclaimed the "Rights of Man," and, casting mediæval lumber to the flames, declared every channel open to the ambition of the humblest. Small wonder the good Alsatian peasants and burghers were proud of their new country, and forgot the violent manner in which their new paternity was foisted on them!

Now all this has changed, and the Alsacians have only to rub their eyes in order to see that in coming back to their original Fatherland they have come back to the victorious mother-country with far more to tempt them than the country that treated them so stepmotherly

whilst they belonged to it. If the Alsacians were practical Englishmen, they would see the position of affairs in a trice, and, after the last fair stand-up fight, make the best of it and be friends with the new order of things. But the poor Alsacians are sentimental Germans; they feel the sorrows of their late fellow-countrymen, and, in their sympathy, are still blind to their own interests and to the real facts of the case. Time will enlighten them, and a strong, healthy, paternal government—not one *à la* Metternich, but conducted in harmony with the spirit of the age—will assist in doing so.

VI.

German Liberals chafe under the restraints of their paternal government, and doubtless the stern system that holds them together has its drawbacks. They would prefer public opinion, expressed through their party, to rule the nation and supply its needs. A look at their past efforts in this direction and at their latest action does not lead an on-looker to feel that Germany is ripe for that humanitarian democracy which substitutes the tyranny of the many for the honest and conscientious effort of a concentrated executive.

If it be granted that a strong military government is a *sine quâ non* of the nation's existence—and that cannot be denied, though it may be deplored—then the dissatisfaction at its unavoidable drawbacks must be taken for what it is worth. Without underrating the great value of a strong and healthy public opinion, it is yet permissible to hold that its expression is not the only source of salvation of a country, the less so as

it is likely to wield as much power when diseased as when it is sound. We ourselves have been saved by miracle from the consequences of some of its diseased manifestations. The cry of misery and despair of millions has forced public opinion to remedy some of our imperious wants, but much remains undone that paternal government in Germany has accomplished, as a few illustrations later on may enable us to judge.

An English M.P. writes to the *Times* deploring that a public meeting cannot be held in Berlin without the presence of a police agent, who can close it at a moment's notice. This is a sad truth; but the freedom of talk has not yet led to a millennium in other countries. Far from it. The unlimited free expression of public opinion is all very well where there are no enemies at the gates; but it is a dangerous pastime for a nation that might be called upon to-morrow to fight for its existence, which would be jeopardized by talk. Germany is not stable enough to allow itself such a luxury.

If the happiness of the greatest number be—once national independence secured—the end and aim of all government, it is but fair to take a glance and compare, as far as possible, in how far paternal government endeavours to secure that end.

In the first place, the ascendancy of Prussia, which led to German unity, was gained against the almost universal expression of public opinion. Public opinion has since recanted in this instance, and thus the book is closed; but history is nevertheless bound to take note of the fact.

Unity accomplished, Germany expected to see

capable conscientious men at the head of every department of the State. We know how uniformly these expectations have hitherto been realized. This has all been done without the assistance of public opinion to guide the choice of the directing minds. But neither was it necessary. Without the action of public opinion, the shaft of duty is sunk deep in the heart and mind of the people and its rulers; it has done far more than any religious dogma in our day to combat and nullify the meaner instincts of human nature.

With us public opinion is invariably surprised and extravagantly grateful when it finds anybody equal to the emergencies of a position of responsibility. And, unfortunately, ignominious failure, even involving disaster and national humiliation, still allows a man to pose in public as the expresser of the sentiments of the nation.

The uniform success of German foreign policy in its broad outlines is well known and admitted on every hand, even down to the Bulgarian Battenberg incident, which public opinion was only too willing to fan into a European conflagration, until stopped by a jet of cold water from Berlin.

Not so well known may be the success of Prussia in conciliating the countries annexed in '64 and '66. Schleswig-Holstein, that certain Powers wished to protect against itself, is thoroughly German to-day. The Electorate of Hesse-Cassel is thoroughly Prussianized, and as for Hanover, the great centre of Guelphic memories and partisanship, the freely elected last Parliament (Landtag) of Hanover only showed three Guelphic adherents, against twenty-eight belonging to the Bis-

marckian National Liberal party. Alsace, it is true, is a long way off such a satisfactory state of things; but it will come—gradually, but surely.

Even the conciliation of a single town has not been beneath the earnest attention of paternal government. The town of Frankfort, after being terribly frightened and feeling the grip of the conqueror round its neck, has since been petted and pampered in every conceivable way. Showy cavalry regiments were quartered in the town to see what effect bright colours and the *savoir faire* of the *élite* of officers could have on the female heart; the Emperor came repeatedly in person; even the treaty of '71 was signed in Frankfort-on-the-Main. Thus, the commerce-gorged citizen of that ilk, after raving at the wickedness of Prussia, and accepting Swiss naturalization in order to avoid military service, has long since come back to the Prussian sheepfold, humble and full of contrition. And to-day the bleary eye of the regulation type of Frankfort patrician lights up when he is privileged to pour his sing-song dialect into the ear of the youngest long-suffering Prussian subaltern. Thus the Prussians, after meeting a world in arms, have shown that they understand the more subtle art of stroking the backs of their newly annexed subjects; and to-day no more loyal subjects exist than the good burghers of the town of Frankfort-on-the Main.

VII.

The victory was won; but it only urged paternal government to criticize and amend a system the success of which had dazzled the world. All Europe was anxious to copy what had produced such results; it

impressed everybody but its authors. They set to work to improve it, and the result is that the army of to-day is no longer the army of 1870. The military authorities have devoted eighteen-years' unremitting work to its improvement. What this means will be brought home to the reader when we recall the historical fact that the organization and armament of our army on the outbreak of the Crimean War differed very little from that of the time of the battle of Waterloo.

What paternal government has done for the defences of the country is patent to the world. But its silent, hidden action is even more instructive than its outward achievements. Whilst public opinion in France is delighted with the perforating effects of the new Lebel rifle on pauper corpses, whilst we wake up to find the millions spent on our rifles, our ships, and our guns squandered, paternal government in Germany has quietly seen to the efficiency of the last button of the Pomeranian's uniform!

Public opinion breathes not a word—no newspaper propaganda—but eyes that never close watch the frontiers of the Fatherland! In the west the fortresses of Metz and Strassburg look so radiantly innocent on a bright summer's day, you would hardly fancy that, unheeded by public opinion, they have been so strengthened and enlarged that those who were familiar with them now hardly recognize them. But strategists know that a sea of a quarter of a million of men might well pause for fear of breaking its waves against their buttresses in vain!

While we, after converting the Enfield rifle into the Snider, discarded it and spent millions on the Martini

only again to find it obsolete to-day, paternal government immediately after '70 introduced the Mauser rifle,* which even now, after seventeen years, can still be safely looked upon as equal to any emergency. And here we are struck by a marked contrast. Whilst we in England make the best articles, our Government generally secures the worst at the dearest price. In Germany, the home of the cheap and nasty, the Government always secures the best article at a low price.

Nothing, however trivial, is too small for the attention of paternal government. Ever since '71 a ceaseless, but severely systematic, series of trials has been going on to improve every article of equipment of the common soldier. Companies are sent on forced marches to test the value of new knapsacks, new gaiters; even new drinking flasks are tried, and the common soldier interrogated by the Emperor as to how he is satisfied with them. With us, according to the latest newspaper disclosures, our soldiers are defectively fed in time of peace. Only lately, in Germany, a new kind of bread has been tested to replace the old military *Commissbrod*. It is not submitted to the apathetic eye of some mighty official, backed by the recommendation of those who have an interest in getting the contract to supply the army with bread. Paternal government does not work like that.** The advantages possessed by the new bread

* This statement is not invalidated by the recent introduction of the repeating rifle.

** As pointing against the spirit of the above, I am reminded of cases of bribery and corruption in the Prussian army and other departments of the state service that now and then become public. To that my reply, that even Prussian institutions are only human and not infallible. But there is this great distinction to be noted in

are set forth, and after their conscientious scrutiny, the Ministry of War give orders that it shall be tried temporarily for a period of three months in a number of large garrisons, and the reports collected and compared. Only if favourable will the new bread be immediately introduced into the whole army. If such attention is bestowed on details, the reader can imagine what the work of paternal government has been with regard to more important matters. A friend of ours, the *beau-idéal* of a Prussian officer, who had passed through the war of '70 as a lieutenant, had lately gone through the six weeks' training necessary to qualify him for the rank of captain. He told us: "It is simply unbelievable what they ask of us now. I only wonder I was able to live through it all." Such are the tests of efficiency required nowadays in the Prussian army! If such be the severity with regard to petty officers, nobody will be surprised to learn that the weeding out that has been going on in the higher branches of the service is of a stern and radical kind. As pointed out elsewhere, neither past services, nor influence, nor family connections, are allowed to sway the dispositions of paternal government. Since the accession of the present young Emperor already a number of beneficial changes have taken place that the old Emperor William, from personal ties, could not bring himself to make!

their working. In Prussia abuses are discovered and sought to be remedied at all times. In other countries only too often they come to light in the moment of supreme danger amidst a battle of life and death. I need only refer to the condition of things with us revealed during the Crimea, during our last Egyptian campaign—with the French in 1870—and with the Russians in the 1877 Bulgarian campaign.

What paternal government has done for the education of the country, primary, classical, and technical, has been referred to elsewhere, and is besides too well known to require further mention.

Having provided the nation with food for the mind, the best of its class, paternal government proceeds to see that the food of the body is not adulterated—no slight task among a people which, in commerce, lays its hands upon everything and counterfeits everything it can lay its hands on!

Whilst, in new-born Italy,* constitutional Austria, parliamentary England, republican France, and democratic America** adulteration of every article of food

* The chemical examination of a so-called Italian "Magliani" cigar, made by the Government in Piacenza, will give an idea to what extent adulteration is practised in the sunny South. The cigar in question contained—(1) A piece of lime; (2) powdered gypsum; (3) a quantity of humus; (4) a piece of wood; (5) a piece of string. As a Roman newspaper sarcastically put it, a mason with his trowel was only wanting in conjunction with a dozen such cigars in order to build a six-storied palace; the necessary materials were all there.

** In reference to adulteration in the United States, it is a sad fact that there is not a single article of food which can be adulterated with profit that is not adulterated. Sugar is adulterated to such an extent that the diseases of the kidneys so frequent in the States can be partly traced to the acids used in refining sugar. Powdered soapstone is added to sugar in order to increase its weight. Such a thing as unadulterated sugar is hardly known. Such a thing as unadulterated treacle (molasses) is hardly known. Honey is produced artificially with hardly more of the real article in it than is necessary to give it a taste. Tea and coffee are adulterated as a matter of course. Adulterated lard and butter are staple market commodities. The adulteration of cheese has reached such a pitch that the export of this article, which was 14 million pounds in 1881, has receded to 6½ million pounds to-day. Beer is adulterated with rice, glucose, and several noxious drugs. Lastly, suet is adulterated with cotton

is rampant, the paternal laws of Germany are of a nature to stop the most hardened offender. For the law provides that those who sell an adulterated article—even if proved ignorant of the offence—are liable to fine and imprisonment. And how that law is administered!!! In England, the spirit of the middle classes tells us, through John Bright, that adulteration is only a form of competition!

Whilst public opinion in England allows not only the legitimation of quack medicines, but the realization also of £150,000 a year to the revenue by their taxation, the Prussian Government either forbids their sale if poisonous, or analyses them and causes their worthlessness to be made officially public, as in the following instance:—

“Warning against Patent Medicines.—An official scientific analysis of a medicine advertised under the name of ‘Schlagwasser,’ manufactured by Roman Weissmann in Vilshofen, has shown the following: It consists of nothing else save a little tincture of ratanhia, or kino, mixed with tincture of arnica, the value of which is between 2½*d.* and 3½*d.*, whereas it is sold at 8*s.* a bottle. It is self-evident that this decoction does not possess the virtues attributed to it.”

Hardly a favourable advertisement, the above! or one likely to increase the sale of patent medicines!

In England, such beneficial announcements are left to the initiative of the Press, which (except in rare cases, such as lately the *Saturday Review*) does not

oil. The above facts are vouched for by the *Commercial Gazette*, which is the *Price Current* of Cincinnati; the *Cleveland Anzeiger*, and other American papers.

publish them, as some papers draw a large income from advertising patent medicines.

VIII.

After safe-guarding the national existence and its bodily health, paternal government energetically pursues its care for the well-being and happiness of the greatest number in all the branches of this difficult task.

Subordinate to the Imperial Reichstag, but independent in its own sphere of action, each German State possesses its own Parliament. And instead of contributing to foment petty rivalries, as of old, these Parliaments now attend to the legitimate satisfaction of local wants—the most perfect form of local government.

The Bundesrath (Federal Council), in which every smaller State is represented and can exercise a fair share of influence, has proved itself an excellent guardian of the national interests.

When Germany was re-organized after '70, a perfect Babel of conflicting law-codes were found in force. For instance, Bavaria alone possessed seventy-eight different civil codes; such towns as Bamberg, Nuremberg, and Augsburg each having a special law-code of its own. A commission has been working for eight years at the new uniform civil code for the Empire. It is now submitted to the criticism of practical lawyers previous to its universal introduction, which will take place gradually, perhaps in three years, without any parliamentary debates. The new commercial and criminal laws (*Reichsgesetz*) are already in force; the highest tribunal is situated outside of Prussia proper, in Leipsic. It is

indeed, according to universal testimony, a marvellous monument of erudition and honest effort to reconcile conflicting interpretations of law, and to meet the legal wants of the nation in the spirit of the time.

Not only is law cheap in Germany—perhaps in some ways too cheap—but it is in stern reality the same for the rich and the poor. The system of admitting to bail, one that tends to favour the rich, and one that is so often abused, is very limited. No offence punishable by more than a year's imprisonment is bailable at all. This may be a hardship in a few cases, but it is a strong point nevertheless. Whether it be an Ambassador or a Professor—for the higher the position and capacity of doing harm, the greater the *délit*—who is accused of a serious crime, he stands on no better footing than the humblest transgressor of the laws.

The transfer of land, with us one of the costliest and most doubtful parts of our conveyancing system, is prompt, sure, and cheap in Germany.

Benefiting by the dreadful experience of speculation and commercial ruin in the years '73-'74, the laws affecting commercial companies, fraudulent bankruptcy, and embezzlement have been entirely recast, whereas we are still unable to get two judges to agree to one definition of the law on embezzlement. Thus it is not surprising that, since the great "crash" (*Krach*) of '73, there has been comparatively little share-company swindling in Germany, although, in the meantime, Berlin is fast outstripping Paris as a money market. During the same period we have witnessed the failure of the Glasgow Bank, of the Cardiff Savings' Bank, of Greenways' Bank, not to mention the many millions the public has lost

through other limited liability companies, bringing ruin and misery to thousands.

Again, whilst the administration of many of our petty savings'-banks, of our hospitals, and other charities has been impeached in public and shown to be wasteful, if not worse, the same classes of institution in Germany are more or less controlled by the State, and show a wonderfully clean record.

The social laws *re* divorce, illegitimacy, have not the draconic character of our own; they are more humane, and yet we have to learn that there is less domestic happiness or more immorality in Germany than with us.

The guardianship of lunatics is under the direct control of the State, and such scandals as we have witnessed in connection with our private lunatic asylums are unknown in Germany.

Spendthrifts are, and habitual drunkards soon will be, deprived of the unlimited control of their fortunes, and although we are suspicious of such laws, fearing they might be abused, as they inevitably would be with us, there is no fear of that in Germany.

In fact, the one failing of this stern paternal government is its humanitarianism: its criminal code is far more merciful than our own, and, up till lately, there was a strong probability of the total abolition of the death penalty. The murderous attempts of the Socialists came in time to furnish a suitable occasion to reinstate it. But the attempts on the late Emperor's life, far from blinding the Government to the misery of the poor and the legitimate aspirations of the working classes, only seemed to direct attention to them; not in craven

cowardice, but in a genuine concern for the welfare of the people. The Imperial Message of February 1881 to the Reichstag brought forward the earnest wish of the Emperor himself to initiate legislation to improve the lot of the working-man. Since then the laws for the benefit of the working-classes have come into existence.

It is as yet impossible to gauge their benefit; but the Imperial recognition of the right of the humblest to the consideration of the State must remain a grand monument to the honour of paternal government.

IX.

Passing from a consideration of the laws of the country again to the activity of the State as an administrator, we find a model bureaucracy doing in civil life the part of the army as a defender against outward aggression.

The German postal service has become the pattern for all other countries. Nothing is too trivial for its attention, and nothing too remote to escape its eye. Whereas we have for many years put up with the disgraceful mail service between this country and the Continent *viâ* Belgium,* and paid a ridiculous price for its transit *viâ* Ostend, the Germans took the initiative by sending their mails *viâ* Flushing; and now that we have joined their protests against the scandals of the

* Not to forget the scandalous passenger service through France and Belgium. Here German paternal government, by its co-operation with the Dutch Government, succeeded in starting the quick through service *viâ* Flushing to Berlin, and has thus rendered signal service to the travelling community.

Ostend line, the Belgians have been forced to put on new steamers.

The parcel-post service, which is cheaper than our own, and which we copied from Germany, shows a surplus, whereas ours shows a deficit.

In the telegraph system the Germans were in so far ahead of us that they were the first to lay the wires underground on a large scale.

With us public opinion is still fighting a continuous battle against the pretensions of private railway company monopolists. The price paid to the landowners for the privilege of running the lines over their property has saddled the public with the most expensive railway system in Europe. The cost of forcing the concessions through Parliament have in course of time cost the companies millions. Thus we are not surprised to read that, although the five largest railway companies in England are virtual gold mines to the lucky shareholders, of 258 railways in England and Wales, 137, or more than one-half of the whole, paid no dividends whatever in 1884. Yet the *Times* plaintively exclaims: "Our commerce is being throttled by the enormous cost of internal carriage; goods often cost more for a short transit to the coast than they subsequently do for sea-carriage to the ends of the earth."

Not only are our railways more expensive than the German lines, but, except where competition forces a keen rivalry, they cannot compare for cleanliness, comfort, or punctuality. The dirt and unpunctuality on some of our Southern lines would be sought for in vain all over Germany, and the power of the Press has

hitherto proved unavailing to secure a remedy for these things.

One of the greatest tasks of paternal government has been "*die Verstaatlichung der Eisenbahnen*," the taking over of the railways by the State. It is still incomplete,* but almost all lines in Prussia proper are now State property. Hence there is now one system and one tariff where formerly close upon a thousand existed. How this one system works we hear from the best of English authorities, "*Bradshaw's Guide*," which states that the German railways are uniformly excellent. That the carriages of each class are better than those in our country has long been admitted; and lately the American saloon-carriages are being widely introduced, not for one class only, as with us, but for all classes alike.

It would lead us too far to enter into every point of the German railway system; we will only mention that the minutest details for the comfort of the public are not beneath the direct notice of the Minister of Public Works, Dr. v. Maybach, who is the supreme head of the Prussian railway system. Whereas one of our latest postal reforms consists in being allowed to post a letter in a postal train with an extra stamp, in Germany not only has it long been permissible to do so without any extra stamp, but all trains carrying the mails accept telegrams also without extra charge.

The railway refreshment bars—with us one of the crying scandals of our railway system, where the favoured contractor is allowed to poison the public without let

* In Bavaria the railways are still noted for their irregularity and inefficiency.

or hindrance—are regulated in Prussia with the utmost care and conscientiousness. Not only is every article which is sold tested, but the price charged is regulated by the authorities. Besides that, in every railway refreshment bar all through the country (and most stations have one) a book is kept to enter any complaint made.

Only a short time ago a Liberal member of the Reichstag accused Dr. v. Maybach of having disposed of a railway refreshment licence by favour to an unqualified person! Dr. v. Maybach proved that under his rule it was simply impossible that even the contract for a little refreshment room at a side station could be given away through influence of any kind. With us there are no refreshment bars unless the traffic is large enough to ensure a rattling profit to the lessee, and then they are a disgrace to our railway system. But the end and aim of all our railway companies is to secure big dividends.

Not only roads by land, but navigable rivers and canals, show signs of the unceasing care of the Government. The former are uniformly kept in an excellent state of repair, and, in reference to the latter, the fact of the Government piercing a canal from Kiel to Wilhelmshafen, at an expense of £7,800,000 speaks volumes for its initiative.* This canal, when completed will shorten the steam voyage from Hamburg to Cronstadt by forty-four hours, from London by twenty-two, and from Hull by fifteen. It will infuse new life into the Baltic, and may do much to revive the prosperity

* Prussia contributes £2,500,000 on her own account, and the Empire generally the remainder, penurious Prussia thus paying twice over.

of ancient cities like Dantzig on the Prussian coast, besides increasing the effectiveness of the German fleet.

Even the cultivation of fish is not beneath the attention of the Government, and a State fish-breeding establishment at Hüningen in Alsace is the nucleus from which the pisciculture of the country receives fresh impulse and development.

X.

The Protectionist policy pursued with regard to native industries has yet to justify itself by results; in the meantime there can be no doubt of the temporary impulse it has given to trade. The Germans, like the Americans, sought in Protection a means, if only temporary, of building up their industries. To oppose this would seem to many like refusing brandy to a sick person because you are a teetotaller. Whether it will in every respect, and in the long run, yield all the results anticipated from it remains to be seen. Also a new dramatic copyright treaty with England has secured protection for German authors which they have long lacked.

Bismarck has said that the fear of responsibility is one of the diseases of our time. This fear he certainly did not feel when he shared the responsibility with his Sovereign of introducing, one by one, the recent laws for the benefit of the working classes. He knew that the vested interests of the country, the landowners, and the well-to-do middle classes would never take the initiative, so he determined to do so himself. To many it is a dangerous doctrine to admit that social questions of the character in question can be solved by the State,

and the attempt to do so will have to be judged by its results in the future. Still, it is a bold attempt, made in a noble spirit.

That the State cannot exercise the power it does in Germany without bringing disadvantages in its train is natural. Nor is it our aim to judge finally in how far the advantages outweigh the disadvantages; that can only be shown by time alone. We only wish to show that honest paternal government has done a deal of really good work such as even a parliamentary majority might be proud of having accomplished. Who, 120 years ago, seeing Frederick the Great return in triumph to his half-ruined and starving Berlin population after the Seven Years' War, would have ventured to prophesy the future greatness of Prussia, which, after all, owes so much indirectly to those years of struggle and popular misery!

So also to-day there is something anomalous in seeing the state of siege proclaimed in the capital and other large towns; to know that the laws which govern the expression of political opinion are almost as severe as under a reactionary despotic government; to know that Social Democracy is feared, and subterraneously spreading and powerful. It is but permitted to hope and believe that the disadvantages may be temporary, whilst the advantages may be permanent. If these facts be realized, the Germans can justly retort on the Manchester system. Has it prevented the land drifting, year by year, into fewer hands? Has it not assisted to exterminate the small holders? The innocent suffer with the guilty. Has it arrested the terrible depression of forty millions sterling in the annual value of English land?

To many it seems as if despotic laws were now and then as necessary in an over-civilized country as in a primitive one. It is as absurd to say that force is no remedy as that unlimited liberty must necessarily be an unalloyed boon. The opinion of the majority is, after all, the expression of force—the will of the many.

CHAPTER VI.

BISMARCK.

A great nation is a nation that produces great men.—LORD BEACONSFIELD.

I.

ABOUT a hundred years ago there lived a German author who wrote: "Oh, that we only possessed national pride and unity, and we should have been one nation, the first, the most powerful, in Europe. One nation! For that alone I wish I could come back again in a hundred years, to see my countrymen as a nation, or to hear of a German William Pitt."*

If poor old Weber could come to life again, he would see much to rejoice over in his fatherland; much that his honest old patriot's heart never dared to hope for; but, above all, he would see Otto v. Bismarck-Schönhausen Prince Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor!

Those who only admire this great man because the fates always turned the critical quarters-of-an hour of history in his favour do not understand or can hardly

* "Democritos."

appreciate him. For in Bismarck's character, boldness, perspicacity, and dogged determination are allied to astute caution in a degree hardly equalled in history. These in their union give rise to a moderation in success equally phenomenal.

For years we follow him, from his modest ancestral home to his entry into politics; everywhere the rough and sturdy Prussian squire, ready to break an opponent's head or to save a man from drowning; everywhere strong, demonstratively aggressive in his unbridled animal spirits. Here and there short glimpses of family affection relieve the picture of its harshness. A descendant of a hardy Northern soldier-family, he seems born out of his time; a paladin longing for the jousts of tournament, or for foray, or adventure by field or flood.

He steps into a position of responsibility, and gradually, very gradually, the strong wine passes through fermentation, and the old nature is as if clarified into a new character. "May it please God," he wrote to his wife (July 3, 1851), "to fill this vessel with strong and clear wine, now that the champagne of youth has effervesced uselessly and left stale dregs behind." Those who had only known Bismarck during the years of *Sturm-und-Drang* hardly recognized the man later on at the head of affairs.

Called to the Frankfort Diet in 1851, as the representative of Prussia—humiliated, if not humbled, at Olmütz—he was a square peg in a round hole for the condition of things as they then were.

In a letter to the Prime Minister of Prussia dated July 5, 1851, Bismarck's predecessor in Frankfort, Herr

von Rochow, tells the following respecting Bismarck's appointment as his successor, and the comments of the then Prince of Prussia on his visit to Frankfort:—"The latter said, 'And this lieutenant of the Landwehr is to be our Ambassador at the Diet?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'and I believe he is well chosen; Herr von Bismarck is spontaneous, energetic, and I believe he will come up to every expectation of your Royal Highness.'

"The Prince had nothing to say in return, but in general he was favourably impressed with this excellent champion of right and true Prussian sentiments. I fancy his Royal Highness would have wished Herr von Bismarck might have been a little older, with grey hairs, but whether with these attributes it would be exactly possible to meet the expectations of his Royal Highness I hardly dare to say."

As yet he is but feeling his way—the possibilities of Prussia as a governing influence had not revealed themselves to him. The aristocratic leanings of Austria were indeed sympathetic to his *Junker** nature, even though this same Austria lorded it over his own country.

At first we only see the militant nature—the fighting man, ready to resent hostility by retort or blow from whatever point of the compass it cometh. The hauteur of the Austrian Ambassador, Count Thun, the President of the Diet, receives its quietus incidentally,**

* Term for Prussian squire.

** This refers to the well-known anecdote of Bismarck taking away the breath of the Austrian Ambassador by quietly asking him for a light for his cigar at a time when none of the German representatives dared smoke before the President of the Diet.

whilst our hero is feeling his way and learning still to appraise facts fully.

Gradually he awakens to the emptiness that underlies the Austrian pretensions. The man who since has hardly ever looked at an opponent without reading him through and through was not long in forming his opinion of the Austrian representative. To those who wrote to him warning him of the political astuteness of his opponent, he replies, "Kinder, das ist ja ein ganz dummer Kerl!"*

But he had yet to clarify and formulate his ideas, and to gain that statesman-like view of affairs which enabled him to subordinate everything to his purpose. He saw himself recognized only as the representative of a second-rate Power, and his strong nature rebelled at the position; but he bore the unpopularity of Prussia with a light heart, and even seemed to take pleasure in the feelings that he evoked.

A Count Isenburg, irate at some remark of Bismarck's, was said to be coming to Frankfort to thrash him! But those who knew Bismarck chuckled at the idea. He himself, hearing of Isenburg's murderous intentions, writes, "I cannot make out what I have done to the good man; I always took him for a harmless person."** It need hardly be said the irascible Count thought the matter twice over.

The gossip of the period teems with illustrations of his bold action and boisterous language, the tenor of which openly revealed his political views and plans. Many of his frank blunt opinions on high personages in

* My good folks, why he is a thoroughly stupid fellow!

** "Preussen im Bundestag," p. 159. Leipzig. 1885.

those days are deeply instructive even now as showing with how little wisdom the world is ruled. For they have invariably proved to be incisive and true. During these years of petty bickering and enforced idleness the idea took possession of him that Austria must be turned out of Germany, and henceforth he became her death enemy.

The Italian war of 1859 broke out and witnessed Austria's defeat. Public opinion in Germany strongly expressed itself in a wish to help Austria; but Bismarck, even before the war had begun, was already half inclined to take the opportunity to join hands with France in humbling her. As this wish, openly expressed, was in direct opposition to the views held in responsible quarters in Berlin, Bismarck was no longer the right person to represent the latter in Frankfort, and was transferred to Petersburg as Prussian Ambassador, where he arrived in March 1859.

There the reputation of his opposition to, and even hatred of, Austria had preceded him, and made him highly popular in Russian Court circles, still smarting under the sense of the equivocal conduct of Austria during the Crimean War.

In the meantime the Italian campaign had shown the hopeless divisions of the German federal States in a stronger light than ever. The victory of France over Austria was the consequence of this helplessness, and caused a popular clamour for union anew to break out in Germany, particularly in the Liberal party.

On September 15, 1859, the "National Union" was formed in Frankfort-on-the-Main, which included in its programme the representation of the German people,

and asked the central power in Germany to be conferred on Prussia.

But time sped on, whilst King William saw that the sword would need to be sharpened before anything could come of this. It was imperative to strengthen the army. Parliament refused to lend itself to a prolongation of the period of military service, as also to the granting of the increased military budget; at least, unless the Government would declare that it was prepared to use the increased armaments to secure national unity. In view of the jealousy of Austria and France, that concession was impossible. The King saw that a Foreign Minister who would have to unfold all his plans to a critical, inquisitive representative assembly must needs give up, or at least must delay, their fulfilment. The King, at the risk of losing his crown, determined to carry out his plans for the re-organization of the army against the opposition of the majority in Parliament, and to obtain the necessary funds and spend them without its consent. Thus arose a conflict between Crown and Parliament. In carrying out this determination to face the opposition of the majority of his subjects, the King looked round for a Ministry to stand by him. One by one they fell in this bloodless battle against numbers.

King William stood alone. In this dilemma, Herr von Schleinitz advised the King to send for Herr von Bismarck, who had already gained the reputation of a bold and determined politician. Thus originated Bismarck's relationship to his Sovereign which lasted unbroken from 1862 till the death of the King.

II.

The years of struggle with Parliament from 1862 to '66 are matters of history, and they tell us that Bismarck showed the same courage and pertinacity as his royal master.

History tells us with what dexterity during this period he hoodwinked his opponents, charming them, as it were, into a false sleep of security only to wake up and find the irrecoverable moment of action past! We learn how, during his short stay in Paris in '62, he confided his plans to the Emperor. "He is mad," the latter said; and the Empress thought him a funny fellow. The French Ministers with one accord agreed that he was not by any means *un homme sérieux!* a man to be taken seriously into account.

The preliminary fight for the standard took place in 1864, when Austria was inveigled into sharing the Prussian campaign against Denmark, which ended in the cession to Germany of Schleswig-Holstein.

It is again a matter of history how Bismarck and the King, still acting in opposition to the parliamentary majority of the country, twisted the division of the spoil into a rope that coiled itself round the throat of Austria on the field of Sadowa in 1866. We find Bismarck starting for Bohemia, on the outbreak of this war, the object of universal hatred, if not of execration. He has told us himself that had Prussia lost he would have unflinchingly committed suicide.

So far we only see the bold political gambler playing for a great stake. The victory won, he is suddenly revealed in a new character; for he who had been

mainly instrumental in bringing this war about, in the moment of victory turns round and boldly opposes his royal master and his military advisers in their wish to despoil Austria. He himself has told us how, during the negotiations of Nickolsburg, he had to encounter such opposition that his nervous system was thoroughly unstrung. The man of iron threw himself on his bed and sobbed like a child.

We have seen the political leader in the making; we will now take a glance at the man. First and foremost among his characteristics we note the rare power of rising at every crisis above his narrower self, and making the interests of his country supreme.

The man who opposed the spoliation of Austria after Sadowa might well call out with Lord Clive, "I stand appalled at my own moderation." For it was not the fear of France, as some erroneously suppose, that dictated such wise moderation, but that prophetic instinct of his—that instinct which often leads genius to be stoned by one generation in order to be adored by posterity—that enabled him to see that a day was near when it would be policy to be friends with the present foe.

Austria has bitten the dust before—in fact, she must almost have become accustomed to it by force of habit; but the Austrians had never before been humbled by a foe who, within a generation of laming their arms, succeeded in gaining their hearts.

Yet such is the present state of things in parts of Austria—where the hatred of Prussia prior to '66 was most intense—that the Emperor William and Prince

Bismarck compete in popularity with her reigning House.

Such is the first result of the working out of this trait of sagacious magnanimity in a great object in Bismarck. Although he may not be able to say on his death-bed, with Richelieu, that he had never had any personal enemies, his only enemies having been the enemies of the State, he can point to even rarer characteristics. The subordination of his own strong passions has often taken a far higher form. If we can picture him as Sylla, the Roman dictator, crushing his rivals ruthlessly, exterminating their adherents, we cannot quite credit him with that stoicism which enabled Sylla to bear in silence the opprobrious epithets of that young patrician who followed the ex-dictator, reviling him, through the streets of Rome. But our appreciation must increase in proportion the more we bear in mind his passionate temper, when we come to consider that no single instance is on record of Bismarck ever allowing his strongest personal leanings, antipathies, or passions to influence seriously his action when the welfare of the State was in question.

III.

The war of '66 concluded, Bismarck returns to Berlin with the King, and takes share in the ovations of the people. He first seeks, side by side with his Sovereign, the condonation of past breaches of the letter of the Constitution, and the Bill of Indemnity is passed with acclamation by a Parliament delighted with national victory.

Now begins the new phase in his activity—the

work of consolidating what had been gained—the strengthening of the North German Confederation, the conciliation of the popular assembly, and the smoothing of the way to a better understanding with the South.

At the beginning of this period falls that master-stroke of Bismarck which was only revealed to the public and to France like a peal of thunder in 1867—the secret treaty with the South. The result of this would have been that even had the French tardily provoked war in 1866, they would have found Prussia at the head of all Germany, a fact they were loth to believe even in 1870, notwithstanding the previous publication of the treaty.

The years from 1866 to 1870, in their creative and consolidating fertility, belong to history; it suffices for our purpose that they were years of unremitting work and successful effort with Bismarck. Their calm was only once disturbed by the Luxemburg quarrel in 1867, which would have led to war then had it not been for Bismarck's moderation. This, again, must be regarded as a striking instance of that self-control and moderation in success so conspicuous in Bismarck's character; doubly so, when we bear in mind that he already regarded war as inevitable.

The leading facts of the war of 1870 and the after-results of these unprecedented campaigns are too well known to require that we should dwell on them. It suffices for our purpose to point out that, onerous as were the conditions imposed on the vanquished in the eyes of the placid onlooker, it was notoriously the work of Bismarck that they were not far more so. Here, as in 1866, Bismarck was opposed by Moltke, of whom a

most impartial French writer says, "Had Moltke had his way, France would have been annihilated." And let there be no mistake: there was nobody to stop the way; Austria was powerless, Russia passive, and the offers of England's interference had been coldly declined. The calm, dispassionate moderation of Bismarck in success, although, perhaps, hardly perceptible to our eyes, has yet been recognized as one of his striking characteristics even by individual Frenchmen.

It is beside our purpose to enter chronologically here into the details of his latter-day internal administration; we only wish to summarize.

The supreme position he gained for himself and helped to gain for his country has, since 1870, been utilized in the interests of peace, so that it has been well said that never before has such immense political power been used with such moderation. This is, perhaps, the brightest jewel in Bismarck's crown of glory, even if in justice we must admit that he only shares it with his late Imperial master. This moral position led to what was perhaps, in one sense, the greatest triumph of his life, when, after the late Turco-Russian War, Europe seemed on the eve of a desperate struggle, and Russia and England met at Berlin, and sought the adjustment of their differences at the hands of the "honest broker."

Side by side with the popular ovation that greeted Bismarck on the attainment of his seventieth birthday—April 1, '85—we cannot resist the temptation of referring to the letter his Sovereign wrote to him in September 1884, on the occasion of conferring on him the military insignia of the order "*pour le mérite*." For it

seems the due recognition of services such as rarely have been rendered to a State by a subject, and is doubtless unique in history as the tribute of a Sovereign, who thus honoured himself as much as him whom he distinguished:—

“Although the significance of this order is intended to be essentially military, still you ought to have had it long ago. For, in truth, you have shown the highest courage of the soldier in many hard times, and besides, in two wars you have shown at my side that, beside all other distinctions, you have the fullest claim to a high military one. Thus I make up for omissions (*Versäumes*) in sending you herewith the order ‘pour le mérite,’ with oak leaves added, if only to express thereby that you ought to have had it before, and that you have deserved it again and again. I so fully appreciate in you the heart and mind of a soldier that I hope, in sending you this order, which many of your ancestors wore with pride, to give you pleasure. In doing so it affords me satisfaction to feel that I am thereby granting a deserved distinction as a soldier to the man whom God’s gracious providence has placed by my side, and who has done so much for his country.”

IV.

Thus the people, who were so slow to recognize the man, have come to look upon everything that has occurred, good or bad, as directly foreseen by or emanating from him. Of course this is as far from being the case as the estimate of public opinion is ever far from being the verdict of history. No human being foresees every turn of the wheel of time; in nine times out of

ten it is the unforeseen that occurs even to the ken of genius. But great men meet the unexpected whilst mediocrity is overtaken and crushed by it. Nor are his great successes alone the most remarkable in the man. The way he has repeatedly turned an awkward occurrence to his advantage supplies us with subject for admiration. When German colonial annexations caused an outburst of patriotism in Spain to defend her rights to the Caroline Islands, public opinion thought that at last Bismarck had got into trouble. But lo! he proposes the arbitration of the Pope, and by that single move does more, without loss of dignity, to conciliate the Catholic world than a series of reactionary laws might have attained.

Uniformly successful abroad, he has failed but once—namely, in his struggle with a foe of a thousand years, the power of Rome. And yet even here, although he failed to conquer, neither was it a defeat; concessions have been made on both sides. Here he failed because success was hardly possible. Yet just this failure supplies us with a forcible illustration of a great trait in the man. After being identified for years with open antagonism to the Papal See, it must have cost his pride no trifling pang to step out lustily on the road to Canossa—he, a staunch Protestant—smoking the pipe of peace with the placidity of an honest purpose.

After leaning for years for support on the best intellect of Germany, after being hailed as the torch-bearer of the modern spirit of enlightenment against the temporal pretensions of mediæval Papacy, it cannot have been with a light heart that he threw in his lot

with many elements of superstition and class prejudice. But those elements meant support against the wild dream of anarchic Socialism, against the petty spirit of "particularismus,"* which is not dead even up to the present day.

If personal ambition—a word that reads so close to egregious vanity—had been his motive-power, is it to be supposed that a passionate, vindictive nature like Bismarck's would have taken such a step?

History is only too rich in instances to show how far easier it is for ambitious natures to be "consistent" in their self-willed aims than to turn back in the face of friend and foe, and boldly cry out, "Peccavi! I was wrong; I underrated the power of the spirits I raised too readily. I must retrace my steps."

Now, although Cicero long ago warned his compatriots that no liberal man should impute a charge of unsteadiness to another for having changed his opinion,** that dreadful German pedantic fad, "Ueberzeugungstreue" (fidelity to conviction), has laid hold of Bismarck on the score of his changed opinions, and reproached him with it. He has been accused of his former leanings towards Austria, of his conversion to Protection, besides his change of front towards the Vatican. Well did he retort to such charges, that he thought he had therein the advantage over those who still remained where they were a generation ago. And this must seem well founded to all those who do not share the

* German expression denoting the individual interest of each separate State.

** Our own statesmen—Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Derby—supply striking instances of changing convictions.

belief of the supernatural prescience of statesmen, but rather see their genius in the capacity of profiting by experience and of turning the unforeseen to their advantage.

Napoleon, who wrote to his brother Joseph, King of Spain, "I know I shall find the pillars of Hercules in Spain, but not the limits of my power," would have come down to posterity a far greater man if bitter experience had taught him to recant in time, and that the limits of his power were limited to somewhere about the Rhine. Has history dealt kindly with him because the warnings Providence sent were lost on him? Has history not denied him the adjective of "Great," notwithstanding his "consistency" in refusing to see the chances within his reach, of rising above his ambitious self, and of profiting in time by the dreadful lessons of his aberrations?

Herein is to be found the main difference between the intellectual power as well as the ambition of a Napoleon and that of a Bismarck—namely, in the difference of the meaning of the latter word itself. To many, Bismarck is the very archetype of an ambitious nature; and so he may be, only with the proviso which his enemies forget—namely, that there is such a thing as an almost divine ambition. What is all earthly ambition compared to the ambitious hope most of us confess to—of a more glorious future? Bearing the latter ambition in mind, how can we ride roughshod over the definition of ambition, and qualify it as a questionable quality? To some, the will to serve one's country at the risk or certainty of unhappiness in this world may

seem as worthy as the ambition that prompts us to be anxious for our personal welfare hereafter.

If there is such a thing as a noble ambition to serve one's country, surely that quality in its highest acceptation is to be found in Bismarck. And, as far as we can judge, we may even qualify his desire to serve his country as one that has its origin in the rights of man; the right to exist as an independent country, free to develop its institutions in peace. For the idea of serving his country by despoiling alien races, which has been the excuse of so many victorious conquerors, has never been one that found favour in his eyes. Without, perhaps, being one of those fanatical believers in the gospel of nationalities—for he is far too clear-sighted to be a blind believer in any set doctrine—it is well known that he regretted the military necessity of annexing purely French territory in 1870. All his previous conquests have been limited to territory to which the Empire of Germany was legitimately entitled by ties of race and historical traditions. We have only to gauge the extent of the German military successes by historical comparisons in order to become convinced of the clear-headed, sagacious moderation of the man in the midst of world-striking success. It is interesting to note how Fortune favours those who have not exhausted her kindness, and how she totally forsakes those who have once abused her. This is strikingly illustrated by the careers of Napoleon I. and Bismarck. The peculiarity of the latter is that he has lived to prove that he deserved the smiles Fortune reserved for him.

It seems but natural to turn to history for com-

parisons, and few characters offer so tempting a subject for drawing parallels as that of Bismarck. For everything about the man is definite and powerfully outlined, down to the exact number of his hirsutory adornments, the popularly accepted three hairs, no more nor less. And this is, in its way, symptomatic. Nothing is too trifling for his individual attention, and he brings the same amount of dogged determination to bear on his efforts to protect the obscure German trader in East Africa as if a great interest were at stake.

To our mind the character in English history which personally offers most affinity to him is that of Lord Clive. The story of Clive's boyhood is such as we could fancy Bismarck's. And if the child be father to the man, Bismarck, again, in his schoolboy days, sitting among the branches of a tree and declaiming the "Iliad" to his schoolfellows, reminds us of Clive. Bismarck's youthful predilection for Ajax Telamon among all Homeric heroes seems to strike a common key in the two men's characters—the hardy fighter, less intent on playing a leading part than in giving play to the unbounded animal spirits of strife for its own sake, but withal honest and trustworthy, if somewhat rough! In daring allied to cunning, again, they resemble each other, though it was only in their maturity that they were called upon to play the Homeric part of Ulysses. The history of Clive's manipulation of Surajah Dowlah and the doubtful treaty with Omichund offers some resemblance to Bismarck's hoodwinking of Napoleon III. and his diplomatic agents.

Clive's marriage and the close ties of intellectual sympathy that bound him to Lady Clive during his

whole life again present many points of resemblance with what we know of Bismarck. And, lastly, the judgment of popular opinion, if not analogous in both cases, is at least curiously suggestive.

The following description of Bismarck's personal appearance is interesting as being from the pen of a Frenchman:—"The outward aspect alone of the man denotes something out of the common; the round face has something of the bull-dog: the broad bald forehead; the deep-seated eyes beneath thick brows, with their impenetrable depth of expression; the sardonic mouth, badly hidden beneath the moustache; enormous ears, as if to catch every sound; the broad chin; everything gives the idea of power and brutality. He is colossal. I have seen him on horseback in the white uniform of the Magdeburg Cuirassiers; I seemed to see one of the mythical sons of Haimon."

V.

Bismarck is a staunch believer in the monarchical principle, and is thoroughly German in his anxiety to guard the privileges of the Crown. In fact, his character as a whole, exceptional as it is, is in many respects distinctly typical of his country, even down to his bursts of irritability. His deference to the Crown is the result of honest conviction, for there is not an ounce of the courtier or self-seeking opportunity hunter in his composition. The stubborn honesty of his nature excludes all possibility of such qualities. With the courage of one who knows not the meaning of fear, instead of blinding himself to the demands of the Social Democrats, whilst combating them, he has yet

tried to gain for himself the knowledge of what is practicable in their demands; and out of it we see the system of insurance against sickness, in case of accident, and lastly, the project of pensions in old age, come one after the other for the benefit of the working classes.

He has tried hard to stimulate the manufacturing classes of the country, and, rightly or wrongly, has sought the assistance of Protection for that purpose. His aim is plain—to make his country independent of foreign manufacturers, and to force others to accept German products. His colonial policy, whether successful or not in the future, has at least already had the one result of giving an enormous moral impetus to the trade of the country.

Whilst party government shows everywhere a craven anxiety to employ only its own partisans—as if rule were a reward of the nature of a bribe—Bismarck has sought co-operation among every shade of opinion down to that of formerly ostracized Republicans. He himself has put it: “I welcome co-operation gratefully from every side, and ask not what party it comes from.”

This, however, from no mere accommodation to self-interest. Every action of his is intended to kindle the national spirit, and in this conciliation is but a means to an end. Thus, if he is slightly responsible for a certain boisterous self-assertion in the academical youth of late, the increase of students’ pugnacity, &c., it must be taken in this light. Also his well-known refusal to receive a German book printed in Latin characters, though surprising to us in its pettiness, is doubtless part of a well-weighed system of national propaganda.

As he has never disdained to avail himself of the

smallest advantage in foreign politics, so also no means are too trifling to gain the end in view nearer home, for the end justifies them.

But narrow natures—political faddists—who ride about on the broomsticks of ragged principles, would fain judge him, and show us their methods how to raise a people out of the political mud of the past. His opponents have not shown that they possess the magnanimity they pretend to find lacking in him. There has been too much wounded vanity turned to hate.

Much of the opposition Bismarck has encountered in his home policy may be traced to the spirit of jealousy felt by advocates of social reform because they were not allowed to carry out their own measures—a feature of parliamentary government in all countries. Many also have been too sensitively anxious to show that they were not led captive by the glamour of military success, and in some notable instances this feeling has been the result of excessive vanity. The average Germans have acute perception, and yet they have never been appreciators of a great man. A sort of self-consciousness makes them loth to surrender their judgment to unqualified admiration for home genius. Goethe, Schiller, and other great Germans knew something of this; and Bismarck himself has said something sarcastically on this subject, referred to elsewhere.

Thus, although long all-powerful, he has been the subject of venomous hatred in his own country, which, it must be admitted, he has given back in current coin. It was but natural, in an age that loves to make itself

believe everything can be done in kid-gloves, Bismarck's remark to Count Beust, that when once we get our enemy in our power it is our duty to crush him, should cause surprise or horrify some. (This animus does not seem to nullify another saying of his, that we ought to be outwardly polite to our enemies even to the steps of the scaffold!) The memorable conflict between Bismarck and Count Arnim is a case in point. He pursued the Count even to the jaws of death, and there can be no doubt that the punishment of Arnim was out of all proportion to whatever he may have been guilty of. But we must remember behind Arnim stood the violent hatred of an entire clique, whom Bismarck struck at in their leader. This was well known at the time, for even the Emperor declared himself powerless to save Arnim from the hatred of the Chancellor. There are battles in political life in which the price of defeat in some countries must be annihilation. That Bismarck is a good hater—enough so to delight the heart of Dr. Johnson—he has abundantly proved; and that his nervous irritability—his impatience of opposition—has largely increased of late years is generally understood. That he has allowed himself to be carried away by the opposition of his enemies, even to impugn their motives without sufficient cause, notably in the debate on the tobacco monopoly, will hardly be denied. Yet even here Bismarck has never allowed personal pique to sway his acts when his sense of duty was called into play.

For all that, we do not believe that a trifling wound to his personal vanity alone could lead Bismarck to show personal animus. There are plenty of incidents

known when he rose superior to it. Among them the following:—

Count d'Hérisson, an officer of the French general staff, tells us in his book, "Journal d'un Officier d'Ordonnance," how he was sent to Versailles to deliver to Prince Bismarck the document signed by the French Government embodying the capitulation of Paris. On the road thither he conceived the bold idea of endeavouring, on his own account, to obtain the release from one onerous condition of the capitulation—namely, the surrender of the flags of the Paris garrison. He therefore told Bismarck that he had brought the document ready signed, but with instructions only to deliver it up if the Germans would relinquish their claim to the French flags. At first Bismarck was very irritated and excited, but gave in at last; thus Count d'Hérisson's *ruse de guerre* was successful. When his book appeared, this passage was met with strong doubts by the public. But it turned out to be perfectly true, for Bismarck caused a letter to be written to Count d'Hérisson telling him that he had read his book with great interest, and he complimented Count d'Hérisson on the patriotic victory he had gained over him. In this as in many other instances Bismarck has shown a generosity of feeling towards foreign foes that he has rarely shown to opponents of his own nationality.

VI.

Even his deficiencies are interesting and often sympathetic to us. At a time when many statesmen divide their energies between the task of ruling and horse-racing, the collecting of old china, casuistic theology,

and other pastimes, it is almost refreshing to find a man who honestly tells you that he understands nothing of the old masters, that he is too old to learn to appreciate "high art," that he does not know the inside of an opera-house or of a concert hall, and that he prefers an Italian organ-grinder to a phenomenal tenor.

Bismarck's dislike of the Press is well known, but is not surprising when we bear in mind how it has followed him all through his political career. How often public opinion expressed through the Press has announced his approaching decline, only to see him rise through each succeeding crisis higher and higher in influence and power. But strong characters, such as he, are not so likely to be appreciated by those of whom Spenser says:

Therefore the vulgar did about him flocke,
And cluster thicke unto his leasings vaine,
(Like foolish Flies about an Honey crocke,)
In hope by him great benefite to gaine,
And uncontrolled Freedome to obtaine.

Also he has been denied the dangerous gift of oratory, of which its detractors say, with some reason, that it has done more harm than good in the world. Orators have rarely been statesmen. Curiously enough, too, history teaches us that most great orators have appeared coeval with a nation's decay: witness Demosthenes and Cicero. Also the thunderbolts that the late M. Gambetta hurled from his jaws only served to re-echo the cry of a defeated country! Neither Richelieu nor Cromwell nor Washington were orators, yet history does not tell us that their statesmanship suffered from the lack of this accomplishment.

Bismarck's is not a nature we can imagine turning out well-oiled periods or emitting polished Ciceronic shafts. But if his periods are nervously jagged and lack rotundity, they fly as straight as a dart, and, where they strike, they pierce the enemy through and through, and thence pursue their winged course right across the country, to be remembered as sledge-hammer blows of conviction and hard-striking reason.

The question of Bismarck's reported dislike of England and the English has been too often mooted not to warrant a passing reference. If we may draw our conclusions from many references to England in his private correspondence, and also from the fact of both his sons receiving English baptismal names (Herbert and William*), we should say that, next to Germany, there is no country and no people Bismarck originally felt so much sympathy with as England and the English. On the other hand, there are some who aver that the continual upholding of English doctrines and methods he has had to encounter in Parliament, not to mention certain occult English influences constantly brought up in even higher places to counteract his plans, have had their share in souring him against this country. That Bismarck is only too happy if he comes in contact with a representative of England who is congenial to him is abundantly proved by his studied attention and courtesy to Lord Beaconsfield** during the Berlin Congress.

* For he is called Bill in the family circle.

** It may be interesting to English readers to remember that Lord Beaconsfield—at all times a great judge of character—was one of the few who were impressed with Bismarck's frank statement of his ambitious aims in 1862, and anticipated their fulfilment.

To many it may come as a surprise when we say that Bismarck's nature is in its root essentially religious. The categorical imperative of Kant is by him translated into a dominating influence, and in the light of his own private confession we must regard him as drawing his strength and foresight from the constant sense of dependence on a higher Will which has called him to his place at the head of the German people. For instance, we find this frank and almost brusque statesman thus writing in the autumn of 1870, while the victories of the war were yet fresh:

"If I were not a Christian, I would not serve my King another hour. If I did not obey my God and put my trust in Him, my respect for earthly rulers would be but small. I have enough to live upon, and, as a private man, I should enjoy as much consideration as I desire. Why, then, should I exhaust myself with unwearying labour in this world, why expose myself to difficulties, unpleasantness, and ill-treatment, if I had not the feeling that I must do my duty before God and for His sake? If I did not believe in a Divine Government of the world which had predestined the German nation to something great and good, I would abandon the trade of diplomacy at once, or, rather, I should never have undertaken it. I do not know whence my sense of duty should come except from God. Titles and decorations have no charm for me. The confident belief in life after death—that is it—that is why I am a Royalist; without it, I should by nature be a Republican. All the steadfastness with which I have for ten years resisted every conceivable absurdity has been derived only from my resolute faith. Take this faith from me,

and you take my country too. . . . How willingly would I leave it all! I am fond of country life, of the fields and the woods. Take away from me my belief in my personal relation to God, and I am the man to pack up my things to-morrow, to escape to Varzin, and look after my crops!"

To us these words bear the impress of deep sincerity. They are clear water welling down the old grey rock, fresh, sweet, pure, and beautiful, round whose course as it flows fragrant flowers may grow, making the hard, harsh outline soft and radiant.

VII.

It is indeed no easy matter to gain a clear unbiassed estimate of the gigantic personality of Prince Bismarck. To a contemporary it is nearly impossible. It is as if we stood before an imposing Alpine landscape, near enough in order to perceive the rifts in the rocky structure, but not far enough away to appreciate the majestic beauty of the outlines and the harmony of colour of the whole.

If this be true of his contemporaries, how much more so must it be the case, with those who stand nearest to him: his own countrymen. The aspect is blurred by the many points of attack of his political opponents. But one fact stands out preeminent amid the chaos of criticism, hatred and admiration: namely that since 1870 the many years of his political preponderance meant peace in Europe and increasing prosperity in Germany.

And now that this Titanic figure of our century has retired into the seclusion of private life—to live on and

to witness still the stability of his work outlast the period of his own personal direction—who can say that the fitful glimpses we get of his mighty individuality contradict the essentially harmonious human estimate we had formed of his character?

The cry of anguish: "I cannot lie down like a hybernating bear" does not lead us into temptation to quibble and sling arrows at the human weakness of a man, whose foibles are sometimes fraught with more greatness, than the life-achievements of many a popular hero.

Bismarck has never assumed the placidity of the stoic. As we ventured to point out, when still in the height of his power, we do not seek his counterpart in the stoicism of the Roman dictator. His heart, his blunt honesty, his instincts were ever German to the core. In order to accomplish his work, it was as imperative that they should have been so, as it was that Martin Luther should have been able to throw his mighty German individuality in the scale against the cunning of the priesthood of Rome. Genius even cannot mark the records of a people for all time, unless its inspiration is fraught with the fragrance of the soil of its birth. Thus the heart-burnings of this great man only bring him nearer to us from the human nature of their source.—It has been well said, that no one can know the utter contemptibility of human nature like a fallen minister. But even others need but have studied the past in order to have expected the howl of triumph of his enemies, that greeted the fall of this great man. Are we not even told, that the death of Frederick the Great—the policeman of Europe, was greeted by a sigh

of relief by the community at large. And yet who heeds his enemies to-day, whilst the lustre of his deeds is more resplendent now, than at the time of their execution. Thus it is ever the fate of truly great men, they gain by the perspective succeeding ages lend to their contemplation.

Still even Bismarck's fall fortunately affords, now that he is still living, an opportunity of qualifying a pessimistic estimate of mankind in general.

There was a glorious ray of human sunshine in that manifestation of sympathy when the grand old paladin left Berlin, amid the beautiful German cry: „Auf Wiedersehen." It does us good to hear of mothers holding up their children to catch another glimpse of those mighty features.—And if we might be permitted to digress, it would be that we are convinced, that if Bismarck were to visit England—that owes him no debt—now in the period of his eclipse he would receive such a universal welcome among us as he might never have called forth in the days of his power.

It is not for us—in fact it is too early for any man—to presume to judge of what is hidden from our gaze and ken. The details of internal politics of a great country may call forth our interest, but they are beside the scope of our judgment. But time need not roll on in order to enable us to feel, that no incident we are acquainted with can detract from our estimate of the genuine human nature underlying the vast genius of Germany's greatest statesman.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARMY.

Nullos mortalium armis aut fide ante Germanos esse.—TACITUS.

I.

VICTORY has given the German army a unique position in the eyes of the world. There is no denying that its composition and characteristics excite an interest the extent of which can only be compared to its achievements.

If a great standing army be a grim, unavoidable evil, at least it can be said of the German army that its end justifies the means that called it into existence. It is an army of peace. It is a nation in arms to secure peace! Its moral standing is by far the highest of any army the world has yet seen. Armies, too patent sources of immorality and rowdyism in all other times and countries, this one is a decided agent of discipline and morality. The habits of punctuality, of obedience, of discipline, the inculcation of the instincts of honour in the humblest, the meeting of all classes in the nation on one common ground of feeling and duty, have physically and morally strengthened the whole German people. This fact is visible to the naked eye of any observant traveller who crosses the German frontier at different points, and compares the populations of the different countries.

We who are proverbially slow to recognize or to acknowledge foreign prowess—and not without some excuse, for we have plenty of our own to look back

upon—we even have come to look upon the German army as something to be admired. “The sternest man-slaying system since the days of Sparta,” one of our most able periodicals termed it.

Even a Frenchman could not help saying that although the German soldiers could not, “of course,” compare with the French, still there was no denying the merit of the German officers! “I have seen them driving their men forward *à coup d’épée*,” he said. But not alone Frenchmen; it has often struck Englishmen that the victories of the Germans have failed to impress many others with the idea of their individual prowess. When we say individual prowess, we mean that glamour of individual valour and dash in the rank and file that has ever had a touch of romance to the eyes of the crowd. For who cannot remember the halo that surrounded our men on their return from the Crimea, and the French Zouaves after the storming of the Malakoff, &c. &c.!

If failure to impress in this way be a fact, and one that was based on accurate observation, then indeed the qualities of supreme animal courage are not answerable for the superiority of the Germans in the field; qualities, that John Bright tells us, can be bought to any extent in the world’s market at £ 2 a week!

It is well to dwell on this fact, and to endeavour to draw from it the only legitimate inferences that present themselves—namely, that Germany owed her success in the field to far higher qualities than those which of old weighed down the scales in the victor’s favour.

Although some nations are still infected with Homeric

traditions of vainglorious martial prowess, the days of the professional hero are gone for good. The old type, that ever utilised a portion of its energies to vilify and diminish an antagonist, has yielded to a better model. To-day the peasant, the plain citizen takes his place in the ranks and steeled in the ordeal of battle, returns as a true type of a hero: a man who has quietly and unostentatiously done his duty.

It is significant, that you will never hear speak of a brave officer in Germany. We constantly hear of "ein tapferer Soldat," a brave soldier, but we fear the Germans might look upon the term a "gallant officer" we are so accustomed to, as slightly tautological—not to say savouring of platitude. They realise a dutiful officer, the other is assumed as a matter of course. A German member of the Reichstag referring to an officer as the "gallant member," as is the custom with us, would be simply laughed out of countenance.

Bismarck boasted, in his speech of February 6, '88, that the Germans fear nobody but God. If we might be pardoned differing from him in this particular instance, we would venture to say that the average German fears even a current of fresh air, which he calls a draught, more than anybody else in Europe. Unlike the French, who are intoxicated by martial glory, if he does not fear fighting, at least it has no charms for him; he dislikes it. But the strength of the Germans lies in the fact that at the call of duty they overcome their fears, and stand—a nation in arms—ready to meet those who have put them to the trouble of doing so.

The German army is not meant to produce pug-

nacious heroes; it has a higher aim, for it succeeds in even training the coward to overcome his timidity and to do his duty. To what that is capable of achieving even the enemy bears witness. Thus Count d'Hérisson* draws the following picture of an episode of the battle of Villiers Champigny: "The Germans, who were truly splendid under fire, advanced in dark masses and at the moment of debouching in loose sharpshooter formation suddenly as one man lifted their muskets above their heads amid a deafening hurrah. This seemed to magnify their ranks like some pantomimic circus effect. Our mobile guards, who had never seen anything similar, were cowed."

But if the popular idea of heroism is rather scouted than valued in the German army, on the other hand in no army is the spirit of true chivalry more cultivated than there. It was consistent with the best Prussian traditions, that when French public opinion sought a scape-goat in Marshal Bazaine, his antagonist in war, (Prince Frederick Charles) a royal Prince and doughty soldier, offered to testify to his worth.

During the battle of Sadowa a company of the second Prussian Foot Guards stood to the right of the village of Rosberitz. A regiment of Austrian Cuirassiers advances at full charge. Captain von Görne orders his men to let them come on within two hundred yards. A well aimed volley! Saddles are emptied, the horses fall. Fresh reserves rush forward in quick succession only to bite the dust before the unerring aim of the Prussians. A pile of wounded horsemen and horses covers the ground. Suddenly a single cuirassier jumps

* d'Hérisson. *Journal d'un Officier d'Ordonnance*. Page 280.

up, runs towards the Prussian lines and, vaulting into the saddle of a stray charger tries to regain his comrades. "Let nobody fire at that man," the Prussian captain calls out in a voice of thunder, and a mighty "Bravo" re-echoes in answer after the flying horseman!

Even in peaceful incidents this chivalric sentiment now and then manifests itself. An instance may be found in the recent impressive ceremony of transferment of the body of the French General Carnot from Magdeburg to France.

In the inculcation of chivalry and the higher forms of the fulfilment of duty the Prussian authorities are not merely content by precept drawn from the deeds of their own countrymen, but have long cultivated a cosmopolitan spirit of appreciating such wherever found. Thus when the well-known harrowing disaster occurred of the foundering of the English troop-ship the *Birkenhead*,* the splendid instance of discipline evinced on that occasion by the English troops on board was singled out by the King of Prussia and the account of it ordered to be read out aloud to every Prussian regiment in parade as a shining example worthy of emulation of the noblest fulfilment of duty.

II.

With the vast improvements in our time in fire-arms generally, other instincts than of old must be

* The Royal troopship "*Birkenhead*" foundered off the South Coast of Africa in February 1852 with the 74th Highlanders commanded by Colonel Seton on board.

called upon to face the shock of battle; not, perhaps, opposite instincts, but certainly qualities of a higher order than hitherto required. The soldiers who of old would show the wild beast roused within them in the heat and excitement of a hard-fought hand-to-hand grapple might not be equally ready to stand at ease quietly for hours while the pitiless "ping" of bullets—fired at a range of 1000 yards—dealt death and devastation in their sullen lines. Troops in days gone by were seldom called upon to make forced marches to the degree that is often called for in the present day; nor were human beings ever expected to lie down and sleep on the bare fields for weeks together, and that mostly in the pouring rain, as was the case in '70 from Weissenburg to Gravelotte and then on to Sedan. Animal courage alone, however high, can never hope to meet such requirements as are now asked of the rank and file of a great European army in the field. That readiness in getting killed is not the only quality required is shown by the fact that thirty-six German cavalry regiments did not lose a single man during the whole campaign of '70! The Sixth-Army Corps hardly was under fire at all.

We, who have not known a war in modern days with an equally armed foe, have never been called upon to realize facts bearing upon one, and yet they are most important if we wish to consider the success of the German arms with a view to learn something from it.

Besides perfect organization, it was the lofty spirit—the stern sense of duty—which alone, under leaders of consummate genius, made those victories possible!

And these leaders, in their turn, were nothing else but the outcome and result of that supreme sense of conscientiousness and duty which is the one key-note of the whole organization of Prussia, civil and military. This trait is striking from highest to humblest—from the King, who reported himself ready for duty, down to the humblest Pomeranian peasant who, at the trumpet call of war, quietly reported himself at the nearest place of enrolment and exchanged the hoe for the musket. This trait is visible everywhere in those iron hoops of the German army: the sergeants and non-commissioned officers. It reaches perhaps its most pregnant significance in the full captain: the company-leader. The young lieutenant, often an easy going lady-killer — is invariably a changed man, when once intrusted with the responsibility of a captain's duty.

If Danton truly characterized "audacity," again and again "audacity," as the watchword of successful revolution, we might with equal justice define "duty," "duty" again and again, as the key-note, the rallying-point, of Prussia's success in the field! This feeling is even unassisted by the traditional "contempt" for an enemy which has ever been inculcated in the breast of the common soldier elsewhere. This undervaluing of the enemy has been supposed to increase the moral strength of an army, although history does not show that it ever prevented a defeat turning into a rout. The Prussians, both officers and men, are intuitively taught to overrate an enemy. Both in '66 and '70 the prevailing opinions were of the superiority of the Austrian cavalry, of the French infantry, &c. The soldiers themselves used to make these assertions dispassionately, but with a strongly

expressed reservation that, notwithstanding probable first defeats, they hoped to win in the end. History has shown that this diffidence did not prevent them being victorious from commencement to finish. The true value of this sobriety of spirit could only have been shown by temporary defeat—by the defensive—and we feel sure that the nation which, above all others in Europe, individually hates war and bloodshed would have shown that spirit under defeat which is more readily found in troops that respect their enemies than in those that despise them, and who, however brave, have to overcome the disenchantment of finding out their mistake too late!

III.

The Bohemian campaign of 1866 brought one Prussian name prominently to the front—that of General Steinmetz, the lion of Nachod. He was a splendid example of that type of stubborn soldier ready to sacrifice any number of his men in his dogged determination to rout the foe. This type of soldier has been common to all times and countries. The Prussian army had seen no active service worth mentioning for generations, and a man of General Steinmetz's mould was well adapted to help it over the first squeamishness in tasting blood. Therefore it was but natural that this rugged soldier of the Blücher school (if it be fair to compare him to so modest a character as old Marshal "Vorwärts") should have come out of the Bohemian campaign to find his name a household word at home. In any other country we should have had the frail female commonly called "public opinion" pointing to

General Steinmetz as the man to lead supreme in future struggles. Not so in Prussia. A higher standard than that of public opinion directed and watched over the destinies of Germany. General Steinmetz's achievements were recognized and rewarded as they deserved to be, but not beyond their deserts. When, in '70, a nation in arms crossed the Rhine to the strains of "Die Wacht am Rhein," it found General Steinmetz in command of the First Army. He was not a man to wait long for orders when an enemy was in sight. He stormed the heights of Spicheren and achieved a brilliant victory, though at the price of a terrible loss of life. But the workmanship that was good enough in '66 was no longer to be tolerated in '70. General Steinmetz had attacked without, if not against, orders, and, although victorious, had disconcerted the plans of his superiors, which, if properly carried out, were intended to cut off the army he had beaten at such heavy cost. In any other country we are acquainted with that frail hussey: "public opinion" would have lifted the victorious General into her lap, and he would have been on the high road to further honours and rewards.

Not so in Prussia; General Steinmetz was commanded to appear before the Red Prince and hear his fate. "Your Excellency, although an old soldier, has presumably forgotten what it is to obey!" words which, translated into their subsequent meaning, conveyed the order to go home at once, stripped of his command, in disgrace: "Cassio, I love thee; but never more be officer of mine."

At the battle of Le Bourget (before Paris), October 30, 1870, the storming column, consisting of the "Queen

Elizabeth Regiment," the first battalion of the regiment "Queen Augusta," and the second company of the pioneers of the Guard, was led by Colonel Count Kanitz. They were exposed to a murderous fire whilst the pioneers had to work their way gradually through every obstacle in their path. The second battalion of the Elizabeth Regiment advances with flying colours, when its standard-bearer falls; another non-commissioned officer seizes the standard, but he, too, is struck down. At that moment General v. Budritzki dismounts, seizes the flag, and rushes on in advance of his grenadiers. Around him fall in quick succession Colonel v. Zaluski, the commander of the Elizabeth Regiment, and Count Waldersee, who had only rejoined the army a few days cured of the wound he had received at Gravelotte. The papers were full of this deed of valour of General v. Budritzki, but for all that he was not promoted to an independent command. Heroism is not enough in Prussia to be entrusted with the welfare of a Prussian army corps.

It is even reported that, although General Herwarth von Bittenfeld commanded the vanguard column in 1866, Moltke refused to grant him a corresponding command in '70, notwithstanding the repeatedly expressed wish of the King himself, with whom he was an especial favourite.

A Prussian officer does not hold a responsible command because of his bravery, but because of his supposed *talent for the disposition* of troops (*Dispositions-talent*).

These incidents are instructive as showing how heroes, however exalted, who disobey orders, or who

—even far less—are judged incompetent although in appearance successful, are dealt with by the competent directing minds in the German army. So little however are these facts understood by public opinion in other countries, that after the retirement of Prince Alexander of Battenberg from Bulgaria some of its exponents busied themselves with his probable nomination to the command of a Prussian army-corps!

IV.

Neither the efficiency of the German army nor the choice of its leaders depends on the watchfulness of public opinion; it is perfectly independent of it, and this is one of the chief causes of its excellence. Even Count Waldersee, the successor of Field-Marshal Moltke, is practically unknown to the public, as he has never yet held an independent command in action. The one supreme condition, the purity of the fountain-head, no public opinion can guarantee; only the "spirit" that dwells in the immediate confidence of the ruler, and makes itself felt down to the common soldier, can do that.

What public opinion is capable of doing with regard to an army we have seen only lately. In France, General Boulanger was installed at the War Office, his popularity daily on the increase. If, during that period, one of those frontier squabbles had led to war, General Boulanger would have been called by public opinion perhaps to the chief command of the army! In this instance public opinion might have placed the fates of weal and woe of a nation of 38,000,000 in the hands of an intriguer of doubtful ability! A recent instance of

the line adopted by public opinion in army matters in Austria is related farther on.

If we are to judge by our own experience of public opinion at home, we may fairly assume that, if we were engaged in a serious struggle, we should be "sloughed" with heroes. An enterprising Press would see that they should break out all over the national body like boils. Not so in the case of Prussia in the war of '70. The mightiest war of modern times hardly produced a dozen men round the brows of whom public opinion could weave its meretricious wreaths. It was not intended it should. It was looked upon as bad form in the army to be thought a hero; and a good sign it was so. Quiet duty was the watchword.

It is eminently characteristic of the above, that when Bismarck inquired after his sons during the war, he did not ask their superior officer whether they had *distinguished themselves*, but whether they had *done their duty*. Strange reading this, for many of those who feel the craving—the lust for individual distinction. —

Cheap heroism—distinction—would often have been easier to gain than to fulfil quiet duty. Men who had been too anxious to distinguish themselves were looked at askance by their comrades. After the war a silent etiquette was promulgated that conversations relating to individual prowess were to be avoided. Everybody was expected to do his duty, and nothing more. The result proved that it has been fairly done. The directing minds saw that it was not done in vain. The campaigns of '64, of '66, of '70, came and passed. Their butcher's bills were quietly settled without swords and

bayonets bending, cartridges jamming, and fighting men being poisoned by rotten provisions. Would that our historians could say the same of our recent brawls with savages!

It may be opined that the Iron Cross was after all a premium on personal distinction, and so it was in one sense, but not in a vulgar, sporting sense. The Iron Cross came as a reward for duty done more than for personal distinction achieved, and in its application and distribution a "truly" democratic spirit prevailed. The Iron Cross was in many instances on the breast of the sergeant and common soldier before it was affixed to the uniform—of those in responsible command. Leaving the ranks to carry wounded comrades to the rear—a common form of distinction in some countries—was hardly a passport to the Iron Cross in '70. Bismarck is said to have jokingly remarked to a German prince, who like himself wore the Iron Cross, that they had both received it as a compliment.

V.

But as everything has its two sides, so too the aspects of personal achievement. Nor do we mean to say that there was no element of individual prowess in '70. We only mean to imply that the cheap sort of meretricious heroism at the expense of duty, which has been and would again be ruin in serious battle, was not encouraged nor rewarded. To prove that every rule may have its exceptions, we cannot help mentioning one of the few facts that have come to our knowledge in which the limits of duty were almost exceeded in a

quiet and unostentatious chivalrous manner. It was at the hard-fought battle of Gravelotte that a company of the Alexander Guard infantry regiment was standing under a withering hail of bullets. The men were ordered to lie down under cover. The officers alone, as if by a superhuman instinct, remained upright, to show the men that, although they were not to be needlessly exposed, there was even more expected of those who were placed above them! Of twenty officers eighteen were killed or wounded on that occasion. If their action was an excess of duty, it was not of a meretricious character. It was done quietly, unostentatiously, with no reporters in sight, and with no individual reward to follow. The true reward was, however, found in the devotion of the troops themselves. For a few days afterwards, on the road to Sedan, this very battalion marched twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four without leaving a single man behind!

Few things call more for our attention, than the wonderful marching capacity of the German army. It is an unerring proof of the moral strength of an army, for its source is far more of a moral than of a physical nature. When the war of 1870 broke out, a friend of ours, who had three brothers officers in the Prussian army expressed himself thus: "Think of me, we shall march the French to death." And the battle of Sedan proved he was right. For it was above all this tremendous capacity for marching which enabled the German army to surround that unfortunate town as with an iron ring. One of the most striking instances of this marching aptitude and the moral force connected with it, was Blücher's junction with Wellington two days after the

former's defeat at Ligny. Heinrich von Treitschke has the following regarding it.*

"The Emperor Francis said to the officers of Blücher's staff: 'You Prussians are devilish fellows.' And Metternich admitted to Freiherr vom Stein, that an Austrian army would have required at least six weeks to recover from such a defeat—whereupon Stein answered with emphasis: 'There you see what moral force can do!'"

It is not so much success as the causes that lead to it that must interest the observer.

Our monthly periodicals dwell from time to time on the efficiency of our army, and draw comparisons between it and those of continental nations. Lately a writer in the *Contemporary Review* stated that "the German armies were defeated by the first Republic and by the Empire of France because they were living on the 'old traditions' of Frederick, and had not adapted themselves to the new conditions. For precisely the same reasons the Austrians in 1866 and the French in 1870 went down before the Germans."

The above is all very well as applying to certain problems of military science; but the "new conditions" above mentioned are not identical, nor covered by any new systems of military tactics or strategy. For instance, in '66 the Austrian artillery was superior to the Prussian, and in '70 the French rifles were again far superior to the German needle-gun. The fact is the "new conditions" are as old as the days of Sparta; besides all tactical innovations and strategical skill in

* History of the "Nineteenth Century". H. v. Treitschke. Vol. I. Page 769.

the leadership, they mean the fighting condition of a healthy strong community with a great cause, and full moral confidence in that cause at its back. The "old traditions" are as old as Darius and the battle of Arbela, and mean the going down of an order of things that has outlived itself through age or unfitness or corruption before the onslaught of health and strength.

The "old traditions" are alive in our midst in England, as shown by the evidence of the Royal Commission to inquire into the weapons and ammunition of our army after the late Egyptian campaign, and it reported that the bayonets, the swords as well as the ammunition supplied were partly defective or useless. The flour was rotten, the biscuits mildewed, and almost every other article of food inferior or adulterated. And yet there was nobody to hang! When a regiment was to embark from an Irish port, it was found that half the men were dead drunk. These are the old traditions!

In Prussia, such is the honest thoroughness and efficient solicitude for the army that, when the war of '70 broke out, as if by magic the whole army was found supplied, with an excellent food, the very name of which—the now-celebrated pea-sausage—had never before been heard of by the public. Such is an instance of the "new conditions" of modern warfare.

It is this wondrous efficiency, this honest and effective administration and devotion to duty from top to bottom that arrest our attention.*

* See foot note page 102.

VI.

We repeat, it is the honest devotion to duty of the unit in the army that impresses us more than the genius of its leaders. The one must pass away, and men will come forward who are comparatively untried, but the other can, and must, remain at all hazards.

The German subaltern officer works in the midst of his men; he presides not only over the drill, which in England is left to non-commissioned officers, but he is their moral as well as their technical instructor. His whole heart is in his profession and with his men, like a foreman in a workshop. Thus he exercises an influence over the character of the rank and file confided to his care that remains with them in after-life. The Prussian army has been the means of raising the moral as well as the physical standard of the masses of the country!

The following extract from the German Field Service Regulations for 1887, issued for the use of the rank and file of the army, may prove interesting:—

“The soldier may learn to march and to handle his weapons by practice; also his body and his mental powers may be developed and steeled; but time alone can produce that discipline which is the key-stone of the army. This is the first condition of every success, and must be cultivated and nurtured above everything else. A superficial cohesion merely gained through practice will give way in critical moments and under the influence of unforeseen occurrences. Only by the most thorough training of the unit can the necessary *cohesive* action of the many be attained. . . . The officer

is the teacher and leader in every department. This necessitates his possessing superiority of knowledge and of experience, as well as superior strength of character. Without fear of responsibility, every officer in every crisis—even the most exceptional—must devote his whole being to the task of carrying out his instructions, even without waiting for orders respecting details. The personal behaviour of the officer is the most decisive influence on the rank and file, for the inferior is subject to the impression that coolness and determination make all along the line. It is not sufficient to command; the manner of the commanding exercises a great influence over the subordinates. Conduct and example create confidence, and nerve the troops to action that commands success. . . . Every one—from the highest officer down to the youngest soldier—must always bear in mind that omission and neglect are more punishable than a mistake in the choice of means of action.”

VII.

In the Prussian army such a thing as appointment by “public form,” and promotion by favouritism—let alone nepotism—is unknown. An officer may even enjoy the intimate personal friendship of the young Emperor without it having the slightest influence on his preferment. It would even be powerless to avert his premature retirement, if he be judged unequal to the responsibility of a higher command.—A rigid system of continually testing the capacity of officers is at work. No length of service will entitle a man to promotion, unless his superiors in command are thoroughly con-

vinced he is in every way fitted for it. After ten or twelve years' service as a lieutenant, a man may be judged fitted to lead a company, and thus gets the rank of captain. He may be the best company leader in the Prussian service, and yet not have the material for a field officer. If such be the opinion of his superiors, good-bye to his hopes of ever becoming a major. When his turn for promotion comes round he receives a quiet hint to retire, and, as a sop, he carries the titular distinction of major into private life, and silently vanishes from the scene. Service in the Prussian army is a national duty, and not necessarily a career for the individual.

Shattered hopes, a lost career it may be, but down you go, as mercilessly as the grass before the scythe, in the interest of the community, in the interest of the huge man-slaying machine, in which you were up till lately the tiniest little rivet, and nothing more.

This same test is rigorously applied to every promotion right up to the rank of full general. That such a merciless system of mutual observation and criticism can exist without degenerating into a hot-bed of intrigue and favouritism, is, in itself, the highest testimony to the moral qualities of the Prussian officer. In other countries the command of a whole army is often given to an incapable general, and the results are invariably such as might be expected.

No regard for individual sensitiveness in the German army. There they root it out stump and branch in the interest of the country.

No title, no family connections, however powerful, are able to do more than enable an officer to serve in

one of a few exclusive regiments, but are by no means able to guarantee his promotion therein. And yet, when we bear in mind what the Prussian aristocracy has done towards making the army what it is, we could even understand a little favouritism, for they have had their bones broken for generations in the service without hardly ever earning any material reward in return. If pride of birth be pardonable, it is so in this instance of generations of unselfish devotion to a hard service. To be nearly related to a great Prussian commander is, if anything, a drawback, for the spirit of rigid impartiality towards one's own kith and kin has before now been the means of even hindering an officer's advancement.

Bismarck's two sons went into the Franco-German war as privates in the Dragoon Guards and—most remarkable—in Germany it was only taken as a matter of course. William Bismarck, the younger, had even served nearly a whole year previously in the same humble capacity. Such an absence of nepotism is only to be found in Prussia. It is looked upon as a matter of course—it exists in all branches of the state service and is one of the reasons the Prussian administration works so thoroughly.

One of Field-Marshal Moltke's *aides-de-camp* throughout the Franco-German War—his brother-in-law—came out of it with no higher rank than captain, and retired some years later through ill-health as major on half-pay. (The number of those whose health was subsequently shattered by that struggle almost equalled those of the killed and wounded.)

Fancy a favourite relative and *aide-de-camp* of Lord

Wolseley through a tremendous war—supposing we can imagine that fortunate peer leading us in a death-grapple—fancy his *aide-de-camp* coming back as he started, a poor captain of a line regiment!

Yes, this very poverty is one of the hoops of steel that binds the Prussian army. The day the Prussian officers cease to be poor, that day the supremacy of the Prussian army will be on the wane. The danger of luxury is a greater one than any foreign combination. The present young Emperor, when still Prince William, said as much when he gave those peremptory orders to his regiment against gambling that created such a sensation at the time. The key-stone of the moral influence and of the position of the Prussian officer is to be sought in the rigid cultivation of the point of honour that may seem almost exaggerated to our eyes. The slightest slur on the character of a Prussian officer is fatal to his chances of promotion, even if it does not entail his immediate dismissal. Thus cases of suicide are very frequent from causes that would appear trivial indeed to those who are not conversant with the rigidity of Prussian notions on this subject. For an officer to become implicated in a brawl or quarrel connected with personal violence, even if innocent, often entails ruin, as it is the uniform he wears that must be kept sacred at all hazards.

VIII.

So much for a few of the characteristics of the “new conditions.” But there are others than the mere questions of efficiency of commissariat, conscientiousness in the performance of duty, intellectual acquirements of

the officers and leaders, and freedom from foul patronage and nepotism that come up for consideration when we examine the qualifications of a victorious army. It is not only the old tactical traditions that go down before the modern improved "system;" it is the meaner impulse that invariably succumbs to the higher, the morally effete to the strong and healthy. As the Persians went down before the Greeks, and as they in their turn succumbed to the Romans, so the latter in their effeminacy bit the dust before hardy barbarian hordes.

How clearly the importance of the moral influence is shown by Oliver Cromwell in his letters!

"How can we expect loafers and tapsters to stand up against gentlemen with a keen sense of honour and loyalty to their Sovereign? We must give them an even higher impetus: we must appeal to their God!"

And from that day forward, even without new tactical systems, down went the Royalists! They went down before the fierce Covenanters, who sought death at their hands, but kept their powder dry!

Coming to later times, we see the same "spirit" at work deciding the fate of nations. In the American War of Independence the oft-victorious English had to lower their standard to their own kin. The watchword of "God save the King" was unable to stifle the cry of men fighting for their existence.

The young French Republic singing the "Marseillaise" and throwing off the tyranny of a corrupt feudalism was victorious as long as it fought against such, for it was not so much the old fighting system that lowered Prussia's flags at Jena as the fact of its army having become a haughty, self-indulgent, separate caste,

no longer identical with the nation. But as soon as the French watchword of "glory" was seriously tested against the devoted religious fanaticism of the Russians, not even the genius of a Napoleon could prevail. And once the German nation rose to Luther's hymn, "Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott," when once Ernst Moritz Arndt gave out his "Der Gott, der Eisen wachsen liess, der wollte keine Knechte" (The God who bid that iron be, could never wish for slaves): when this spirit rose, the day of glory ("le jour de gloire" of the "Marseillaise") had sunk into night and the French marshals were beaten in every engagement in which the great Napoleon did not command in person until the battle of Leipzig gave him the *coup de grâce*.

It may be an effect of the imagination, but when we remember the soul-stirring sounds of the famous "Watch on the Rhine," "Es braust ein Ruf wie Donner-schall Fest steht und treu die Wacht am Rhein," we think we hear the manifestation of that invincible spirit against which it was but natural that the "Marseillaise" should shriek in vain.

When we recall those public gatherings in Carlsruhe, Berlin, and elsewhere after the news of the first victories, when the bare-headed crowd joined in those soul-stirring chorals of Luther's, we feel that such a spirit was bound to conquer.*

* Regarding the spirit that animated the German troops in 1870, we hold the following testimony from W. McKellar, an English surgeon, who accompanied the German troops and was taken prisoner by the French at Orleans: "There was any amount of heroic courage among the French, an indescribable enthusiasm animated the Germans. I met several, mortally wounded, who gloried in their wounds: to the exclusion of all meaner thought of self. One

So much for the action of the divine instinct which binds us to the unseen and unknown in its influence on the affairs of man in war. It is divine inasmuch as it appeals to and draws its strength from something higher than our every-day selfishness and vanity—the devotion of each unit to the welfare of the entirety. Where this spirit prevails in the administration as well as in the people, cartridges will be found to go off, there also provisions will be found adequate, and there will victory incline. May that stern sense of devotion to duty, may that rare efficiency and integrity in its administrators, may that earnest enthusiasm for an independent, united Fatherland, long distinguish the Germans and preserve them as the great nation they deserve to be!

IX.

Others may try to copy the system that has shown such excellent results, but they cannot suddenly appropriate the qualities that have made the German army what it is. The one and the other are too much bound up in the qualities of the people, and are the result of the laborious work of generations. Parliamentary legislation born of an excited expression of public opinion cannot supply such to order!

To take but one special feature that has done so much to raise the moral value of the rank and file of

young fellow of the artillery—one of four brothers, two of whom fell during the war—was brought in to me at Orleans with a thigh crushed. Quite forgetting his mortal suffering, he raised his head and pointing to the eagle on his helmet, cried out: ‘With God for King and Fatherland’ ” (the motto on the Prussian helmets).

the German army—the leavening of the mass with the educated element—the one-year service. It has been tried in France, and had to be given up. The rank and file of that land of equality, instead of benefiting by its association with the educated classes, were envious of the favoured elements, sneered at them as “aristos” (aristocrats), and made their life a misery to them. The consequence is that everybody in France now serves equally his full time in the ranks, and many of the educated classes leave the army thoroughly disgusted with the hardship and coarseness of the life and its associations.

The career of General Boulanger in itself throws a lurid light on the incapacity to raise the higher ranks of the army to a level that could inspire confidence in their discipline.

The French have copied the cunning of espionage, but the unity of moral purpose does not seem yet to be theirs. They have a great military history, and they love war; the imagination of the race is captivated by it, but it is doubtful whether the temperament of the people fits them for its requirements in our day. The next struggle will solve that question. But one thing is certain: the days of the *beau sabreur* of popular imagination—the prize-fighting warriors of old—are gone from the scene of modern warfare for ever. The tactical training of the unit under a model organization of the whole, led by the comprehensive mind, more surely than ever wins the day. The highest discipline without red tape seems to be the recipe for victory nowadays, for nowhere is independence of judgment, freedom of initiative, from the leader of a *corps d'armée*

down to the non-commissioned officer, so cultivated and encouraged as in the German army. The French temperament possesses these qualities to an eminent degree (*l'esprit de la situation*), but it lacks one of the most important qualities that lead to success always—the due subordination of the individual.

Of Austrian military affairs we do not often hear much, but, when we do, it is often a sad business. At the time of the occupation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina after the Treaty of Berlin, their cavalry not only managed to receive a check at the hands of irregulars, but, almost amusing to relate, their soldiers were on several occasions in danger of starvation. Poor simple souls; their leaders had doubtless heard of the Prussian “flushness” of cash during the '70 war, and, with true Austrian cunning, they had provided themselves with money! The unimportant fact that Bosnia is not identical with wealthy agricultural France had not suggested itself to these strategic thinkers.

But far worse than all this was the little episode at Graz in 1888. Austrian public opinion was in a fever of surmise at the sudden retirement of General von Kuhn. The journals of the dual-monarchy expressed their surprise, and united in the hope that the army would not lose the services of such an eminent soldier in the hour of need. No sooner had public opinion let us into its high estimate of General von Kuhn than that distinguished officer himself assists us to form an estimate of its egregious folly. In his speech to 500 officers at Graz who made a demonstration in his favour, carrying him home on their shoulders and

flourishing their swords, he proved himself to be a windbag, as the following few excerpts prove:—

“My prowess at Santa Lucia is known; it belongs to history. It is less known, perhaps, that at Custozza I stood with only two guns and without any cover against a whole army corps, and thus partially contributed to the success of the day. . . . In the year 1859 I had the intention of taking the offensive. That it did not take place was not my fault. If the offensive had been followed up, things would look different in Europe to-day (!). If we had taken the offensive at Sadowa the victory would have been ours.”

Of such stuff are some officers who hold the highest commands still made in Austria, and such is the standard of the rank of the officers that 500 of them could be found to applaud it. No wonder the Austrian Emperor judged it was time to shunt such a man.

It is not too much to say that the conduct of General von Kuhn, as well as that of the 500 Austrian officers, was as discreditable as it would be impossible in Germany. It only proves what a hopelessly long way the Austrians are yet from that ideal standard of efficiency which they fondly fancy they have learnt by their defeats from the Prussians!

What a contrast to a man such as von Moltke! Lord Wolseley does not believe he will go down to posterity as one of the greatest captains; but strip him of strategic exploits that seek in vain in history for a parallel to the magnitude of their scale, strip him of that literary ability that has given us charming books of travel, and a purity, a terseness, a dignity of style that has earned a comparison with Tacitus for the his-

tory of the '70 war issued by the Prussian General Staff; strip him of all this, and a character remains, unsullied in its spotless purity as in its modesty: a cultivated intellect of the highest order.

The man whose iron, unquestioned, supreme decision has winged the flight of Prussian victory, is almost a hermit in the privacy of his Silesian retreat. In her greatest strategist Germany has produced a character of the very highest type, one far removed from the feverish self-advertising egotism of our time. One who stands nearest to him by the ties of relationship and friendship assures us: "The field-marshal is above all a man of almost childlike purity of mind, one to whom the shady sides of human nature have remained so to say unknown." No wonder, that even victory and worldly glory have been powerless to affect the simplicity of such a man. His estimate of the value of popularity is best recorded in his own words: "When I have to listen to the boundless flatteries bestowed on one by the public, I cannot dismiss for an instant the thought, How would it have been if success — unexampled success had not crowned our enterprise?"

This silent warrior, for whom the Germans have found in their expressive language the beautiful words, "*der Schlachtenlenker, der Schlachtendenker*" (the battle-ruler, the battle-thinker), when this silent thinker speaks, it is the trumpet-blast of war that calls for his utterances. They crystallize; they turn to granite to mark the milestones of history in which his country figures victoriously.

Our Wellington in Spain, and Cincinnatus in Rome.

unite to furnish historical parallels to his character. His example is the proudest possession of the Prussian army.

On the eve of Count Moltke's ninety-first birthday, the "Reichsanzeiger" (October 25, 1890) brought the following tribute to his fame:

"Field Marshal Count von Moltke completes his ninetieth year on Sunday. In accordance with the will of his Majesty the Emperor and King, and the feelings of all classes of the people, all Germany celebrates this birthday as a National Festival. For the nation owes it in no small measure to the deeds of the veteran Field Marshal that it is united in a powerful Empire, that its *prestige* among the nations of Europe has been greatly enhanced, and that it has now long been able to devote itself undisturbed to the labours of peace. It is a tribute due to the Field Marshal, glory crowned, undefeated, and yet great also in simplicity and modesty, when, on this day of honour, Princes and people with one accord express their gratitude to him in the most convincing manner. Ninety years of a precious and blessed, but also laborious, life lie behind him. They form a reflection of the destinies of Germany. To Mecklenburg belongs the honour of having given the Fatherland not only Queen Louisa and the national hero of the Wars of Liberation, Prince Blücher of Wahlstatt, but also the greatest General of this age."

After giving a detailed account of the Field Marshal's career, and describing the manner in which the Emperor and the people were preparing to do him honour, the "Reichsanzeiger" concludes:—

"But above and beyond all outward festal arrangements, our eyes are raised in prayers of thanksgiving

for all that Heaven has given the German people in and with 'our Moltke,' and also in the earnest hope that the venerable Field Marshal may long be permitted to enjoy the gratitude of his King and Fatherland, and that the German nation and the German Army may long be destined to see him among them, their brightest example."

And here let us add the official text of the Emperor's congratulatory speech to Count Moltke on the same occasion:

"My dear Field Marshal—I have come to-day, with many illustrious personages and the leaders of my Army, to express our heartiest and most deep-felt congratulations. For us, to-day is a day of retrospect, and especially of gratitude. First and foremost, I express my thanks in the name of those who worked and fought along with you, and who are gone, and whose faithful and devoted servant you were. I thank you for all you have done for my House, and for the promotion of the greatness of our Fatherland. We greet in you not only the Prussian leader who has won for our Army the reputation of invincibility, but also one of the founders and welders of our German Empire. You see before you high and illustrious Princes from all parts of Germany—above all, his Majesty the King of Saxony, who was a faithful ally of my grandfather, and who has not let slip the opportunity of proving his attachment to you in person. We are reminded of the time when he was permitted to fight side by side with you for the greatness of Germany.

"The high distinctions which my late grandfather bestowed upon you have left me no means of specially

testifying my own gratitude; I, therefore, beg you to accept one mark of respect, the only homage I can do you in my youth. It is the prerogative of the Monarch to have the emblems on which his soldiers take the oath, which fly before his troops, and symbolise the honour of his arms and the valour of his Army, standing in his ante-room. It is with peculiar pride that I renounce this right for to-day, and beg you to allow the colours of my Guards, which have so often waved under you in many hard-fought battles, to find a place in your dwelling. A lofty history lies in the ribbons and tattered colours that stand before you, a history which has been written chiefly by yourself.

"I beg you to accept this token of your rank (the Emperor here presented the bâton) as a personal *souvenir* of myself and as a memento of this day. The real Field Marshal's bâton, which you earned under fire before the enemy, has long been in your hands. This is only a sign and symbol of my respect, veneration, and gratitude. I beg you, gentlemen, to join me in the cry, 'God bless, preserve, and cherish our venerable Field Marshal, long a blessing to the Army and the Fatherland.' We are grateful to him for being great enough not to stand alone, but to form a school of military leaders who, trained in his spirit, will be the strength and glory of our Army."

X.

We cannot conclude this chapter without a word of criticism on our own army system, though it is a thankless task—something like firing at a barn-door ten yards off; you cannot help hitting it!

In order to raise the scientific qualifications of our officers we have—in mistaken imitation of the Prussian tests—introduced a severe system of competitive examination. As usual with our official imitations, instead of improving on the original we have entirely missed the substance and grasped the shadow. Such a thing as “competitive” examination as a means of entering the army does not exist in Prussia. The Prussian aspirant has to pass “an” examination to test his fitness, but not a “competitive” one! Therein lies the difference between the substance and the shadow.

Our competitive examinations favour the chances of the bookworm to a ridiculous extent, and in many cases exclude the character capable of quick resolution and prompt initiative—qualities so highly valued in the Prussian service that they are even specially dwelt on in the printed instructions for the rank and file of the army previously referred to.

Our present method has given us the Staff College instructors, and started a system of “cramming” by which men who have been pupils and, later on, preceptors at the Staff College are able to earn an income of £5000 to £6000 a year by preparing candidates for the service examinations!

It does not require any argumentative force to show that our competitive examinations must thus miss their mark, for every form of cramming means knowledge artificially acquired and illegitimately applied. There can be little doubt that it even excludes some of the finest material in the country from the army! But that is the way we have gone in for the “new system” that laid the Austrians and the French low! And yet one

of our leading journals tells us: "We cannot afford to have it understood throughout Europe that there is any point whatever in which the British army is surpassed by those of continental nations." If this be true, then it is a dead certainty that we indulge in luxuries we cannot afford. Our newspapers are discussing the excellence of the new German drill regulations and advising their adoption. Vain endeavour; the spirit that still believed in 1855 the verdict of the Duke of Wellington in 1815, that a bullet was no use unless large enough to smash a horse's leg—that spirit, unhappily, lives on among us!

Of our officers themselves the Duke of Cambridge sapiently informed us some time ago that the main difference between them and the Prussians consists in the fact that the latter live on their pay and the former do not. But no, that is not the only difference; our officers are not only members of a privileged class, but they are often made to feel and work like Foreign Office clerks, from ten till four. They cannot help it if they would; the surroundings are too strong for them.

It may confidently be said of our army that as long as it is administered as it is, fanned by occasional gusts of newspaper and public-speaker panics, so long will it remain a sink down which to throw millions of money, but scarcely a reliable means of defence to our country!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GERMAN ARISTOCRACY.

Unde superbit homo, cujus conceptio culpa,
Nasci poena, labor vita, necesse mori?

I.

NOT only in its character, but in its very composition, the German aristocracy shows a marked contrast to our own. With us many of the most eloquent panegyrists of aristocracy are to be found outside its charmed circle; in Germany it would be difficult to find many sympathizers with the nobility among the middle classes or among the masses. And the explanation is not to be sought only in the difference of the two aristocracies themselves. Differences of evolution, of tradition, and of influence account for this and many other peculiarities of the German aristocracy.

We remember the surprise of a great Prussian landowner on being told of the almost tyrannical power our land laws and our leasehold system give to an English territorial grandee. "How can your people put up with it?" he exclaimed. And yet such is the case. We have long put up with things that have produced revolutions elsewhere. And yet the English aristocracy still has a large following in the country, whilst in Germany the nobility has next to none. Weighty causes must be found to account for this, quite independent of any amount of servility in the English character, or any want of that amiable compound in the German; both nations, to start with, may have little to reproach

themselves with on that score. These causes will be found to exist to a large extent in the following facts and their consequences.

II.

The German aristocracy, notwithstanding its many strong points, has ever been not only guilty of great class selfishness—as has ever been every privileged class—but it has been the victim of its own short-sighted and narrow class feeling. In England a far-sighted policy of sacrificing its units has strengthened the power for good and for evil of a class. In Germany the anxiety of each unit to retain its shadowy advantages has resulted in the loss of what was most valuable to retain, and in the retention of much which, though of small value to-day, has contributed not a little to reap for its holders that lack of sympathy of which we find the German aristocracy the object in its own country.

In olden times a title meant more than a mere empty attribute of privileged birth; it meant a position of power, either personal or inherited. Not so many centuries ago even the offspring of royal blood in England, let alone the sons of the nobility, were commoners. Royalty has in our day adopted the fiction that every son of a king is born a prince. The main difference between the aristocracy of England and that of Germany is to be found in the fact that the German aristocracy has slavishly adopted the example of royalty, whereas the English aristocracy has, up to the present day, held to the original idea that a title must represent power. Primogeniture is the key-note of the English aristocratic power; the title is reserved to the eldest son, who in-

herits the bulk of the property. Thus an English title usually means a large landowner. A German title means in most cases nothing more than an amiable descendant of one of many who once, "perhaps," owned land and power. The English aristocracy lives on its estates in the country, and there forms centres of social and political life. The small percentage of the German aristocracy that lives in the country, even if rich, leads a life of economy, solitude, and intellectual stagnation. It wields neither social nor political influence.

Not only in the transmission of titles have the Germans copied the example of royalty, but in other points of scarcely minor importance. The modern royal customs—even laws—of intermarrying only with equals, which were originally designed for political purposes only, have found servile followers among the German aristocracy, without any excuse or pretence of policy. The consequences of such action have shown themselves to be disastrous in more senses than one. They have resulted in the gradual erection of a barrier which in our day may be said to divide the aristocracy of birth from the aristocracy of intellect and the middle classes more than they are so divided in any other European country.

The Germans, who before now have been accused of pedantry and doctrinarism, have proved themselves essentially pedantic and doctrinaire in the constitution of their aristocracy.* It is an unduly extended and yet a closed oligarchy with a weak action of the heart. With us the aristocracy is constantly strengthened by

* This applies even with greater force to the Austrians, who in this as in so many other points are one with the Germans.

the admission of new blood. Not only that, but the younger branches of a great house pass untitled and unnoticed back into the commonality, and carry with them into the middle-classes their sympathies for their powerful relations. The German system has had the precisely opposite effect. Each scion of a noble family inherits the title, the social status, and the obligation to marry according to his station (*standesgemäss*). This erects a barrier between him and the untitled which has proved disastrous in its results all round. What would a German petty baron think of the son of an English duke, whose ancestry might put half the "Almanach de Gotha" to shame, marrying a commoner's daughter, or entering a wine merchant's or a stock-broker's office? And yet the former very often happens, and the latter has happened, in England without lessening by one iota the prestige of the aristocracy. The well-connected English member of the middle classes may well look upon a peer as only his superior by chance of primogeniture; he is of the same stock—of the same flesh and blood. The German untitled citizen is cut off from the aristocracy without even an imaginary connecting link.

In Saxony, indeed, so distinct is the line that separates the aristocracy from the people that the former can even be seen to be of an entirely different race from the latter. The Saxon nobility is a tall, fair-haired race, with the true Germanic cast of features, whereas the mass of the population is rather short and thickset, with features bearing distinct traces of Slavonic blood.

III.

German pedantry hugs the magical word "von," the idea of quarterings—even if they be emblazoned on empty space—and, in so doing, has often, here as elsewhere, sacrificed the substance for the shadow. Thus, German pedantry has no idea of the English feeling that classes untitled families among the proudest aristocracy of the country—such as have refused titles, but are well known by their honourable standing of generations. It is the "von" that does it, not the distinction of the family. Though, once the "von" possessed, it must be admitted that an old, inferior title stands far higher than a modern one of more ambitious sound.

Far be it from us to lose sight of the splendid qualities to be found among the German aristocracy. Still, we cannot help deploring what we must consider the weak points of an institution which must reform, or lose much that its well-wishers would gladly see it retain.

Even German royalty has of late set the German aristocracy a shining example of rising superior to class prejudice, not only in the matter of marriage (this it has often done), but in another direction.

Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria has set up in regular practice as an oculist at his own expense. He has built a regular hospital for eye diseases, in which the poor receive advice gratis. He himself has his daily hours of consultation from two till five o'clock in his own house, where, assisted by a young doctor in his pay, patients of every station receive advice gratis. It is stated that in the course of a few months he gave advice to 2800 patients and performed 290 operations,

among them some of great importance. It is interesting to note that his wife, a princess of Braganza, thoroughly enters into her husband's profession, and constantly performs the duties of nurse to his patients.

Another Bavarian prince, Louis Ferdinand, uncle of the present King—married to the Spanish Infanta Maria de la Paz—studied medicine in Munich and Heidelberg. The Bavarian Government waived the State examination in his favour, and he is now entering on regular practice.

Princess Helene of Schleswig-Holstein—aunt of the present Emperor—is not only married to Professor von Esmarch, the eminent surgeon, but he is recognized and is on the best of terms with the royal relatives of his wife.

Lastly, a Würtemberg princess is married to a Breslau doctor, and, strange to say, instead of raising himself in the profession by such a match, he is even said to be looked upon askance by his colleagues for having married out of his sphere of life.

What the untitled intellectual class of Germany thinks of the prejudices and privileges of the German aristocracy is well illustrated by the following words of the eminent writer, Gustav Freytag: *—

"The German commoner will ever be an uncompromising opponent of all those political and social privileges by which the aristocracy still claim an exceptional position among the people. Not because he is envious of these usages, or that he would wish to put himself in their place, but because he recognizes sadly (*ohne Freude*) that in their consequence they are

* "Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit," vol. iv.

apt to warp their judgment, their knowledge of the world, and also their firmness of character. Not only that, but because some of these antiquated traditions, such as the privileged position of the aristocracy at Court, even expose our princes to the danger of sinking down into the narrow horizon of the German *Junker*. For the noblest force, the leadership in the domain of ideal and practical affairs, lies with the citizen class."

IV.

Changes are more easily suggested than carried out, and more so when, as in the case of the German aristocracy, a good deal is to be said for things as they are.

Its very poverty has called forth special virtues, and in many other ways the German aristocracy has been able to retain much that is valuable and in danger of being swept away in our democratic age. But even taking the good manners and breeding, so beneficial in social intercourse—the sense of chivalry often inculcated from father to son—at their highest estimate, we must deplore the more that narrow spirit that has so limited their sphere of influence.

The English aristocracy is popular because, side by side with the greatest possible development of class power, it has retained its connection with the people by its younger sons, who mingle and intermarry with the middle classes. It is popular because its ranks are constantly recruited from the people, if even in a somewhat eccentric fashion. But, above all, the sources of its popularity must be sought in the extraordinary instances of strong characters it has ever had the good

fortune to produce. And not only this, but because the peculiarities of its constitution have ever allowed such characters to wield political power, and thus to attain great personal popularity. English nobles have dazzled the popular imagination by their liberal ideas, by their generosity, by their individual superiority to class selfishness. They have not weakened the power of their class by so doing, but strengthened its hold on the feelings of their countrymen. And to what an extent they have been successful in so doing may be judged by those who fully realize what the power of a title is to-day in England in our democratic age of transition. An unworthy subserviency of the middle classes, a base instinct of cringing and toadying to the fountain of many favours, may explain "some," but it does not explain by any means "all" the hold the English aristocracy has retained on the imagination of the people. Least of all does it explain the hold it has on the uneducated masses. That influence is partly due to many excellent qualities that the English privileged class has shown from time immemorial.

English popular feeling rightly or wrongly looks upon the aristocracy as a curb on the pretension of royalty. The German people look upon their aristocracy as the toadies of royalty. English nobles do not care to hang about a Court like German nobles, for the German nobles, as a class, feel it their vocation to serve the Crown. They have less sentiment for the country at large, less of a broader patriotism.

The quarrel of Bismarck with Count Arnim revealed some of those characteristics of the Prussian Court noble that are so distasteful to the people at

large; in fact, it may be said that the popular feeling that Bismarck was fighting an aristocratic Court intrigue upheld his popularity through this memorable trial.

Rich Englishmen of position do not like the scraping and bowing of Court life; it is foreign to the best English character. They either mix with princes on terms of semi-equality or avoid them.

But we are not writing a treatise on the English aristocracy, and we only mention some of its strong points and their results in order to show more markedly how similar evidences of class-influence are absolutely non-existent in Germany. We can but draw our conclusions. Whoever would expect a noble German landowner to head a subscription list for any scientific or charitable purpose? Whoever thinks of asking a noble in Germany to preside at a public dinner? The German Philistine would feel his dignity offended by so doing, though he might be willing to toady quickly enough to a high-placed official; but to subordinate himself to a mere title would revolt his nobler self. The German will bow and cringe to a powerful official, but not to a mere empty title—"Nie und nimmermehr." The same may almost be said of the highly cultured professional and mercantile classes. The feeling of reverence for the aristocracy does not exist in the form we know it.

As for the lower orders, their sentiments for the nobility are such that the least said of them the better. The distrust felt towards the nobility by the masses is so great that the German Conservative party have to take it into account, and are often forced to put forward

parliamentary candidates without titles, fearing that it would be impossible to carry through one of their own order. In England a personal connection of a prominent public man or of a great landlord is sure of a following among the electorate. Even a man like Mr. Gladstone had to fight hard in a Liberal constituency against the influence of the young and politically unknown son of the great Scotch landowner, the Duke of Buccleuch. In Germany being the son of a great landowner would avail a candidate next to nothing. Even the son of a Bismarck has found it no easy matter to court a German constituency. —

V.

It would indeed be reading the signs of the times wrongly if we only deduced this marked difference from a greater independence of the German people. It is not that, for the German Philistine can be as debasingly fawning as any smiling Briton. The main explanation lies in the difference of the German aristocracy to our own.

It no longer has any power to wield for good or for bad, except in its own society. Elsewhere it has little or no influence. It has nothing to give, no favours to confer, as the reward for being toadied to. Our aristocracy can still give and confer. The German has rarely produced men who lead great movements, who stand in the front rank fighting for new ideas, rallying a large following around them, while casting a lustre on the class they spring from. And if the cases of Stein and Bismarck are held up to us as proofs of the contrary, we submit that the popularity of these great

men was, and is, purely personal, and as it did not spring from, certainly does not at all transmit itself to, the class to which they belong. The susceptibility to such a feeling does not exist.

The German mind can only grasp a popular noble in the light of one who is opposed to his class. The German middle-class mind, ever suspicious and critical, would refuse to believe in an aristocrat, as such, who had not broken with his traditions and cast in his lot with the enemies of his class! This is a great misfortune for the aristocracy, and partly also for the people, as it robs it of the services of many noble-minded men, who are driven to consume their high aspirations for the general welfare of the community in inactivity, knowing they are not able to come forth except to excite enmity, without any chance of doing corresponding good work. That such is the case is largely owing to the short-sighted policy of the German aristocracy as a class from time immemorial. The individual exceptions to such policy have been too unimportant to be worth recording. The German nobility has held to the letter of its privilege, to its high-sounding titles, to its Court sinecures, to its cheap glamour, to its narrow-minded customs of intermarrying, and in so doing has lost, as before said, the substance for the shadow. It has done its best to deepen the ditch between itself and the middle classes, and by so doing has arrayed the latter among its envious enemies. For he who says "envy" may as well say "enemy." The truth of this axiom is most clearly proved by the dying out of the French hatred for their nobility; there is nothing left to envy since they have shrunk into the last refuge of good

manners and chivalrous feeling. Such qualities are not striking enough to produce popular enmity.

Let us hope that some day such qualities will awaken universal sympathy and respect in all countries, and produce that best form of flattery, when the flattered are worth flattering—imitation.

It is well known that the German aristocracy has ever used its influence to ostracize the untitled, not only from its own society, but from that of its Sovereign. And the smaller the State the more petty and pertinacious have ever been its efforts in that direction. And the poorer its representatives the higher the value they have ever set on their fictitious possessions of privilege.

It is hardly known outside of the Fatherland that, with the exception of the official world, only the titled are privileged to be received at Court. And even of the official world itself, the female portion are (beneath a very high rank) excluded from the privileges often only temporarily enjoyed by their husbands—a striking contrast to our social conditions, that do not preclude a wealthy shopkeeper escorting his “lady” to a reception at the Prime Minister’s house if he be lucky enough to induce his *employés* to vote him into Parliament. But then wealth with us is a certain passport to Parliament, and through Parliament into society. In Germany neither one nor the other is the case.

Now, though many may opine, and in Germany many do so, that the importance of all these trivial distinctions is hardly worth mentioning, we beg to be allowed to hold a very different opinion. German merchants and men of culture will tell you, “We care not for Court life, or for the society of our aristocracy;

they are not worth having." We cannot share this opinion, even if we were willing to believe that it were always honest, and it did not now and then remind us of the fable of the fox and the grapes.

The German Courts, and notably the aristocracy, are still the repositories of social tact and good manners, and it is a great disadvantage to the untitled cultured to be cut off from a free and unrestrained intercourse with such elements. If it does nothing else it keeps class jealousy and envy alive. But it does more than that; it indirectly influences the excluded in many other ways than they might be prepared to admit—there are certain things people are so unwilling to admit.

VI.

Can it be doubted that if the social influence of the great historic German houses—for they include many splendid names, though the acres they possess are rarely as broad and as fat as our own—could be brought more directly to bear by more easy intercourse on the cultured untitled, it would beneficially influence them mutually? Such an initiative would open up to the German nobility the full wealth of intellectual power and healthy vitality that is innate in the great German people. Such intercourse would broaden the views of many persons in high positions in Germany, and it would gradually help the German people to a more generous appreciation of the many excellent traits of character often hidden away in old crumbling *châteaux* or devoted only to useless Court routine or sport.

To know is often to love, as ignorance is only too often the parent of hatred as well as of vice. A new

departure in this direction would strengthen those excellent feelings of solidarity with all the good in human nature that underlies much of the less amiable outward German characteristics. A greater *rapprochement* between the aristocracy (and through it with royalty) and the middle classes would be a new element of strength in the common battle to be waged against the subversive elements that are gradually coming to the fore in all European countries. Germany was the starting-point of the spiritual re-birth in the Reformation. Germany is in the centre of Europe, and standing there must be the centre of support to retain all that is worth retaining from countless generations of effort and strife.

But, besides this more serious aspect, there are minor points to be considered that alone are well worth our wishing the barriers between the aristocracy and the middle classes might be somewhat removed. German manners in general would greatly improve thereby. That everlasting feeling of anxiety as to our position is death to ease of manner, and not a little accountable for much petty unhappiness.

Removing the class barrier would facilitate intermarrying, and would tend to make commercial men look at aristocratic officers less as drones who can only marry for money. Rich commoners might marry aristocrats—a rare case now, when thousands of penniless titled old maids are doomed to celibacy, and often eke out their sad existence in those mediæval institutions we find all over Germany—homes for old maids of noble birth. The daughters of the poor aristocracy are sadly handicapped in the competition for husbands.

For the accomplished daughters of the supposed wealthy foreigners, the many comely English and American girls that swarm on the Continent, often prove too tempting to the poor German baron, and make him oblivious to their want of the magic prefix of "von" to their names.

VII.

Some of the manifestations of aristocratic class pride would be most amusing if they were not so unfortunate in their results. It is not so long ago that at Hanoverian watering-place dances a line was drawn between the nobility and the untitled! At a little Mecklenburgh watering-place like Heiligenbad a commoner was looked upon as next door to a culprit. And even nearer the large German towns, at public dances a marked division between the classes can still be easily noticed, as the foregoing will lead the reader to suppose. However, these lamentable traits are only to be met with in the feudal North. Elsewhere, particularly in the democratic South, they would not be tolerated. And, even in the North there are many influences at work tending to lessen class prejudice. They die hardest in the out-of-the-way capitals of some of the petty principalities, where national life pulsates too slowly to kick the beam of nonsense out of sight.

The late Emperor Frederick retained in middle age the pure romantic idealism of early youth. To him every form of privilege and undeserved favour was an abhorrence. He now and then even seemed to go out of his way to honour the untitled. For instance, his friend and *aide de camp*, General Mischke, was not of

noble birth. This trait of the Emperor's character was one of the reasons of his great popularity with the intellectual classes.

Count Alfred Adelmann, a talented writer and a personal friend of the present Emperor, has long broken lances for the untitled citizen classes and their excellent qualities. He tells the aristocracy that it must either work like the rest or go to the wall. To its honour, it must be said, that there are many more among the nobility who think likewise.

A very amusing and, what is more, an authentic instance of class pride, is worth recording. It is instructive as showing how the most vicious qualities of a class are always to be found in its *parvenus*.

A great Berlin banker, who had been ennobled, and whose son was serving in the army, had invited the officers of his son's regiment to dinner. During the dinner the colonel noticed that all the officers of the regiment were present except one who was not in possession of the magical noble prefix of "von" to his name. Asking his host why the officer in question was not present, the banker replied with a smile, "I intended that we should be entirely *entre nous*!" Whereupon, at a signal from the colonel, all the officers rose and left the house.

It seems a pity that such sentiments do not always meet with a like prompt rebuke. Still, we must say, from wide personal observation, that, notwithstanding the German popular prejudice about the army being the hot-bed of aristocratic class feeling, it is precisely among German officers that the more absurd pre-

judices are rebuked and often ludicrously exposed. It is true there are certain regiments the officers of which are almost exclusively drawn from the nobility, but beyond that it would be the greatest mistake to suppose that a title forms a passport to advancement and positions of responsibility in the German army; nothing of the sort. The powers that be wink at and even encourage a harmless class feeling among officers as far as it can be done without harm to the institution itself. And if it maketh the noble's heart glad to know that all his brother-officers belong to his set, surely the German military aristocracy has earned a right to such small concessions of sentiment. But there they stop! Once class privilege might interfere with the effectiveness of the huge man-slaying machine, once the sensitiveness of the noble born might endanger the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier, it is swept away like cobwebs from the corners of a looking-glass. From the moment responsibility is attached to a post, class privileges count for nothing, and, whether in the army, in the civil service, or in any other walk of public life, untitled merit takes precedence of the highest birth.

To the honour of the German aristocracy be it said, poor as it may be in coin of the realm, stripped as it may be of territorial, social, or political influence, it stands its ground in the army as well as in the administrative offices of the State with an iron sense of duty and with a high average of intellectual power. In fact, it may be said that the conscientious manner in which the German nobility has performed its duty of late in the army has served more than anything else to

decrease the envy that undoubtedly is still felt for it in the Fatherland.

We remember meeting a grisly-haired Count of the Holy Roman Empire, a captain in a Prussian foot regiment—the oldest captain in the army, we were told. At first we could hardly understand a man of his lineage—for his family figured in the magic “*Almanach de Gotha*”—being only a captain at his age. The oldest captain in the army! What a position of relegated fitness! A glance at the expressionless bullock’s eyes and five minutes’ conversation solved the enigma. His intellectual gifts were limited to the leading of a company, and there he was, leading it. How apposite and fit, how truly Prussian! That one little instance was well calculated to supply us with the key to many a Prussian victory, had we needed one. The aristocrats who guide Prussia’s destinies are not in the habit of giving a son an important command to soothe the feelings of a father whom they feel they cannot again entrust with high office.

VIII.

A class peculiar to Germany is the poor aristocracy, for a large percentage of the German nobility is very poor indeed, living from hand to mouth. Among them one long struggle goes on to uphold the privileges of birth against the power of money; and tradition is the only weapon they can wield. Their children are brought up in the Spartan simplicity that inculcates self-denial at an early age. The daughters are accustomed to give way to the sons, who have to serve in the army, and to whose equipment every spare mark

must needs be devoted. Outward appearances alone must be kept up at all hazards.

The mother is the head of the family here more than elsewhere. She it is who nurtures the feeling of pride for the noble descent of their family. The veneration for what has descended from bygone generations is excessive, and extends to the merest trifles. An ornament has no value if it can be bought at a jeweller's shop, whereas the most insignificant bit of jewelry is a treasure if it has descended from a great-grandmother.

Yet this poor aristocracy, with all its prejudices, has done a lot to form the sterling hardness of the German character.

Although we must admire the many good points of the German aristocracy, we cannot help thinking their position and prospects as a class to be anything but enviable. Whatever their merits as individuals, as a class they are only too likely to reap what has been sown by their forefathers. The more so that they have not got a partisan, a worshipper, and an incense-burner in the clergy, as in England.

With us, even if the aristocracy were deprived to-morrow of the popular sympathies it enjoys, it would still have the means of adding to its power by the constant addition to its ranks of wealthy commoners, and by our extravagant rewards for any services it may render to the State. In Germany both these sources of power are non-existent. Wealth does not lead to ennoblement; and services to the State, in whatever capacity, have seldom been extravagantly rewarded. The case of Bismarck is unique; for the dotation to

Moltke and other great leaders in the war of 1870 were all but nominal according to our standard. The highest services are invariably only rewarded by the honorary distinction of high orders and the personal friendship of the Sovereign, which accompanies its recipient into private life on his retirement on a frugal pension. The consciousness of having done his duty has to make amends for the lack of opportunity of acquiring worldly riches.

To-day, the greater number of aristocracy would, but for the profession of arms, be absolutely penniless, if not breadless. For, although they largely fill the higher Government civil appointments, their number is limited, and the pay is so little at the start that only those can enter the service who have something to fall back upon.

This can only be looked upon as a great national misfortune, and the more to be deplored when we remember the services the poor German aristocracy has rendered to the State as its military servants.

We are almost inclined to ask ourselves, Would German unity ever have come about had it not been for the splendid staff of aristocratic, but poor, officers who have for generations devoted their lives unselfishly to the profession of arms and to the service of the State? The poor German aristocracy has helped nobly towards the creation of a powerful, united Fatherland.

CHAPTER IX.

GERMAN SOCIETY.

Le commerce des honnêtes gens ne peut subsister sans une certaine sorte de confiance; elle doit être commune entre eux. Il faut que chacun ait un air de sûreté et de discrétion qui ne donne jamais lieu de craindre qu'on puisse rien dire par imprudence.

LAROCHEFOUCAULD.

I.

GERMAN society in its wider sense is a prism of many, but by no means harmoniously blended, colours. In few countries is the aristocracy of birth so cut off in social life from some of the best intellect of the land. Nowhere is intellect found so largely outside the circles of wealth and high birth, for German society does not bow to talent alone, like the French. This distinct social feature is a result from within, for the tendency of the Prussian monarchy of late has been to recognize and raise the purely intellectual elements of the country even more than is done in England. But, whereas with us the recognition of brains is invariably followed by the social acceptance of its possessor's family, in Germany it stops short of the women-kind.

With us a great Professor is distinguished by royalty, and the aristocracy follows suit (if it has not preceeded the recognition of royalty), and the upper middle classes follow in its wake, receiving and visiting the lion's wife and family.

In Germany this is far different. A great artist, a man of letters, an eminent man of science may be

loaded with stars, or appointed to high office; he will be readily received either in his personal or in his official character, but the aristocracy will not visit him, nor will the nobility visit his wife. His wife has no social status. She is not "hoffähig," which means she is not qualified to be received at Court, the test of social position in Germany. Even more, should she be of noble birth herself, and previous to her marriage have been presented to her Sovereign, she forfeits this privilege on her marriage with a commoner. These facts may seem of small importance to the casual observer, and yet they are accountable for much that is peculiar to German society. They are at the root of, and partly explain, the inadequacy of woman's social status in Germany.

In England undoubtedly, too, as well as in France and America, there is a definite line drawn between those who belong to and those who are outside the narrower pale of polite society. Still, it is not so patently an arbitrary distinction as in Germany. In fact, it does not carry with it the sting of its injustice and its irremovability; for in the above countries there are few individuals who, by wealth and a sufficient amount of tact, or by tacking the sails, cannot hope to enter the charmed circle. Whereas in Germany these barriers are almost irremovable.

It is not the mere presentation or non-presentation at Court that marks the difference. The arbitrary exclusion of many of the most cultured women in Germany narrows the circle of their social life, to which they naturally attach more value than men, who are more actively engaged. It causes them to feel a kind of

neglect, which produces envy and jealousy. Thus we are often struck in such circles by a tone of bitterness, if not of dislike, when speaking of the aristocracy or even of the Crown.

This feeling becomes doubly galling when the Germans see strangers admitted in their best society who have neither birth nor breeding nor brains to recommend them. For the nicety of perception of the German mind is often woefully at fault when dealing with foreign elements.

Insular assurance and American "shoddy" force the gates of the minor German Courts—Yankee woman-kind, whose male belongings are at home, perhaps cutting up pork-chops in Chicago; or a green, awkward Yankee youth, you will find talking to a worthy English countess, of an inquiring mind, with his hands in his pockets! The jump from pork-chops to the peerage is apt to unsettle the nerves.

English half-pay military or naval captains—a refuse of the militia thrown in—sometimes with a growing family, living abroad for economy on a third-floor flat above a butcher's shop, go to Court and have been known to answer the addresses of royalty again with their hands in their pockets.

A shabby-genteel coterie of middle-class sweepings who are distantly related to half the peerage, and let you know it in and out of season; a poor, seedy, shunted English diplomatist and his "good lady" ablaze with a Primrose League "jewel," and with the face of a cook in front of a Christmas joint—these are a few specimens of the foreign element in German society. For if refined natures are rare in any country, they are

rarer still among the travelling representatives of a nation.

But such are the elements that push their way in their own country, and, being "hoffähig" at home, can legally claim presentation abroad. Thus it is the fault of the Germans themselves if they make much of foreigners in society; why don't they make more of themselves? For, as long as they exclude the untitled, an English, French, or American commoner, who at home has no barrier but the limits of his self-assertion, will be rightly accepted in German society, for he has perhaps the requisite standing in his own country.

This can only be remedied in Germany when the intellectual classes in possession of means come more to the front. Unfortunately, present circumstances are little calculated to fit their womankind for an enlarged scope of social duties.

II.

Other social results can also be traced indirectly to this artificial barrier erected between the professional, scientific, and wealthy commercial classes on the one side and the nobility and royalty on the other.

The German aristocracy is limited to the intellectual life to be found within its circle, which is slightly sporadic. This state of things is disadvantageous to the aristocracy, besides narrowing its popularity, as shown elsewhere. The intellectual and wealthy classes are debarred from that contact with a certain urbanity and graciousness of manner, a deference to women, which still, whatever may be said to the contrary, is a marked characteristic of the best German nobility. It

is true the excluded classes do their utmost to ape aristocratic manners, but like all imperfect imitations they lack finish, and are liable to be over-done. This applies especially to the womankind.

The universities, the army, the public services are open to all classes alike, and there all Germans gain a certain cosmopolitanism of views and manner, which, if it now and then falls short of a standard that can only be attained in a highly refined family circle, yet compares fairly with that of similar classes in other countries. The German women of the middle classes, on the other hand, show the painful results of their social restriction in more ways than one. The feeling of their derogatory position begets, as aforesaid—though it be never so much denied—a latent feeling of envy and jealousy, which shows itself in excessive sensitiveness. This again, in its turn, is the ever-recurring cause of exaggeration of manner and want of tact. Thus intercourse with the middle classes is far more *difficile* than with the aristocracy. Their manners are exaggerated in their punctiliousness and exaction, and you can innocently tread on toes whilst you fancy that you are gaining golden opinions.

The middle classes are often exaggerated in their sensitiveness, and, besides that, are grievously given to ill-natured small-talk. Hyper-sensitiveness is one cardinal characteristic of German society, as it is a marked one of German character generally, which a broader and more cosmopolitan horizon of social life could not fail to diminish, if not entirely to banish.

To these facts may also be traced that want of prestige in society which marks German women of the

untitled classes. A contact with the highest society would soon show German women the consideration which their titled sisters enjoy, and which they would not be slow to strive for. Whether they would find the sterner sex ready to render it, or whether they would be able to wield the weapons that secure it, is another matter. The fact remains that, however well educated middle-class German women may be, they generally suffer from a pettiness of feeling and thought which is not calculated to make their lords bow down to them amidst the wear and tear of every-day life. And the proof of this is, that they do not succeed in being treated with that deference and regard in private life that ladies invariably meet with in the German aristocracy, as well as in the educated society of England, France, and America.

Holding, as we do, that women should be the depositories of all that goes to make up and regulate the smaller amenities of social life, we cannot but deplore that the influence of some of the best German women is, in that respect, very restricted and limited.

Average Germans have a tendency to give way to their temper in dealing with the ladies of their family which can only surprise those to whom it is a novelty. The countrymen of Schopenhauer do not often err on the side of too much consideration for the fair sex *per se*. If a person is unpopular, it seems only to add bitterness to that hatred if that person be a woman. Some journalistic attacks on the Empress Frederick bear testimony to this. They evidently think they are in the right, but they do not seem to incline to be generous. It is indeed sad to note that slander, with

regard to women, is easily set in motion and very prevalent in Germany. In fact, it reflects by no means a "nice" side of the national character.

The wide prevalence of the custom of spending daily hours and hours in beerhouses is not without its consequences in roughening the manners, particularly towards ladies, and encouraging the love of small-talk and gossip. It is not that Germans are not scrupulously polite in outward form towards ladies; it is in the intimacy of every-day life that they cast off too often those necessary little *égards* that mean so much.

Among other disadvantages, we think the beerhouse tends to foster a forgetfulness that honourable old age is also a patent of nobility to be honoured. And as a straw is sufficient to show the direction of the wind, it may be noted that smoking is indulged in in the presence of ladies to a degree that is hardly consistent with scrupulous regard for the fair sex. Even hard smokers will admit that the capacity of self-denial in this respect can now and then be legitimately called for. The average German hardly ever stops to think of self-denial in such matters. Custom has made him essentially egotistical in the trifles of every-day life and a healthy female influence is not yet apparent to check him.

Fault-finding may be a thankless task, but those who feel they are not blind to their own country's shortcomings may claim some excuse for dwelling on those of others. Still if our national reputation on the score of social manners hardly places us on an undisputed point of vantage to decry others, we may quote the

opinion of a Frenchman* who has shown a rare appreciation of Germany:

"The German—unless belonging to the ideal race of great poets and thinkers—hardly knows the exquisite refinement of manner, the delicacy of pointed irony. When his heavy temperament enters into a discussion, strong words accompany his arguments, and they fall fast like heavy paving-stones. . . . Even genius does not always preserve them from these excesses, and three centuries of culture have not deprived the strong 'table talk' of a Luther of its freshness and classicity!"

Farther on:

"The Germans, proud of their strength, show no sign of senility in their national life. Their failings rather tell of barbarism than of decrepitude; they offer a strange mixture of primitive coarseness and of civilization. The barbaric is in the blood, the superior and civilized nature is due to education."

A Frenchman may perhaps be more justified in using such strong language than one of ourselves, for the Latin races, withal, still retain a grace of manner, even in the humblest sphere, to which the Teuton as well as the Anglo-Saxon may well aspire in vain. Still, the subject of manners is a peculiar one. Much that is uncongenial to us in the manners of another people ceases to be so when we get to live among them and understand their ways and methods. Some of our own insular peculiarities, usually put down to want of consideration for others, are as often as not the result of a certain shyness which, once understood, generally

* "Les Allemands." Par le Père Didon. Paris: Calmann Lévy. 1884.

reveal beneath the surface a far greater cordiality of feeling than that underlying continental scraping and hat-lifting. So, also, beneath the somewhat rough outward manner of the North German there is often far more fairness, if not generosity of sentiment, than is to be found among more readily "taking" nationalities.

Downright vulgarity is not often met with in Germany, but, when it is, it is far worse than in England. It is more often allied to intense sensitiveness combined with aggressive arrogance and "Rechthaberei"—the mental disease of feeling and asserting yourself to be always in the right. In England even the most vulgar feel a certain nervousness, and are cowed before birth and position: it is not so in Germany.

This brings us to the consideration of a German institution which, if not conspicuous for vulgarity, is not without a taint of barbarism—duelling!

It is nurtured at the university, and is customary in all grades of German life, except the humble classes. Since the '70 war it has perhaps been on the increase, and, only the other day, two schoolboys, of the respective ages of sixteen and thirteen, were had up before the court of justice in Stuttgart* for fighting a most determined duel *à outrance* with pistols. They were both dangerously wounded.

What can be said against duelling has been forcibly put by Schopenhauer in his essay on the meaning of "honour," and his arguments are unanswerable—among them, that nations of such admitted virility as the Swedes, the English, and the Americans (now also the Russians) do without it.

* July 28, 1888.

That the "touchiness" of the German character encourages duelling is certain; also that the university authorities look upon it as a necessary means of inculcating a certain manliness. In this case German youth certainly stands at a disadvantage compared to the youth of those nations which possess manliness without it.

Then, again, it is asserted by military authorities that duelling is necessary to the discipline of the army. If such be the sad truth, it must be admitted that it is not allowed to degenerate into bullying; it is kept within the narrowest possible limits, for no officer is allowed to fight a duel without previously asking the permission of the Council of Honour of his regiment, and an unprincipled duellist would soon, like Othello, find his occupation gone.

But which ever way we look upon it, it seems a pity that this barbarous custom should exist practically unrestrained, and be answerable for much sorrow and wrong in the country during the year. For German duels (except those at the university) are anything but child's play. The middle-aged professional man, at the slightest insult, remembers his university days; and is ready to meet the fiercest military fire-eater with sword or pistol.

III.

Leaving duelling out of the question, the above strictures must, of course, not receive acceptance without a due reservation and allowance to be made. Except duelling, they hardly apply at all to the best society of the wealthier cities of the Empire, besides

the former free towns of Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfort-on-the-Main, &c. There we find the patrician burgher supreme, and with him all the peculiarities of his supremacy.

The days when the good Frankforters used to speak French in their social gatherings are passed away; also the ambition of the *jeunesse dorée* of Hamburg and Bremen to pass itself off as English has undergone a slight transition.

Nowadays the commerce-gorged types of Frankfort sun their dull features in the blaze of stars and ribbons earned in the dust and glare of battle, and feel themselves belonging to a great military nation against the creation of which they literally raved and whined.

The social status of the well-educated and wealthy commoner in the above-mentioned towns, to which a few others might be added, is a far higher one than where he is over-shadowed and left in the cold by a Court and its military surroundings. In capitals such as Dresden and Stuttgart it is comparatively rare to see a civilian in the best society. Everywhere glittering uniforms; sets that are patronized by the *élite* of cavalry regiments; others, more humble, that are content with the infantry, who hardly ever congregate socially. Official balls, where the subaltern and the minor civil official have to dance with the gawky daughters of their superiors till they wish themselves away. Here the male element reigns supreme, but in the above-mentioned towns the fair sex exercises a controlling social influence, although it has not always been employed as well as it might have been. Still, anybody who has

mixed in the best society of these towns cannot have failed to notice the well-bred ease of manner of the ladies and their high culture. With the possession of money there has grown a cultivation of the fine arts and a great diffusion of the social amenities of life generally. These towns mostly possess a patriarchal oligarchy consisting of the wealthiest families, some of them with a history reaching back many generations. There is less distinction to be found between the titled and the commoner, and yet the petty spirit of cliques that is peculiar to social life in Germany shows itself even there, though in a special form. For the wealthy merchant-citizen has a class pride of his own, which is not always justified by the small attention he pays to externals. We remember a charming young man who hailed from Leipsic; he would persist in showing a set of grinders as green as the copper hull of an ocean steamer. In everything else he was the essence of punctilio!

The wealthy citizen is deferential to his woman-kind, which has a knack of exacting deference. But he has often a bumptious hauteur and purse pride which put to shame the pride of birth of the noble with sixty-four quarterings. A class that with us is often known for its toadying to the aristocracy now and then shows bloated arrogance in Germany. The wealthy consul—here and there a generous patron of the fine arts, and combining the culture of intellect with the manners of good society—is often an arrogant type of hard-headed counting-house life. Never so uneducated as some of our City magnates, he is more arrogant and offensive. This arrogance is too often the veil under

which he tries to hide his conscious social inferiority to the noble of the capital.

Although the wealthy Frankforter patrician will give you to understand that he is the equal of any Count of the Holy Roman Empire, he is yet conscious that he is only their equal in his own imagination as long as he is within the four walls of his beloved father-town. He has a distinct knowledge that though his daughters may receive the best society at home, they have only to marry a commoner in Berlin or Dresden or Munich in order to lose their social feathers and to be quietly relegated to a place outside the select circle. Thus the consciousness of his greatness is a very imperfect one, and, as such, shows all the drawbacks that imperfect convictions are apt to develop in the human heart. After all, the good German patrician town-folk are only human, and, as such, but the creatures of the petty character of their existence.

Berlin is the one town in the Empire where untitled intellect has from time to time held a distinct and recognized social position, and, hand in hand with rarely cultured women, exercised a distinctly beneficial social, if not even a political, influence. The intellectual society between the years 1830 and 60 in Berlin wielded more than local influence. Men such as Prince Pückler, Varnhagen von Ense, the Mendelssohns, Lassalle, and women such as Rahel Levin and others, left their stamp on the thought of their time. They inspired as well as entertained. The fare then offered was of Spartan simplicity, invariably only tea and small cakes, and yet in their hands society offered the only analogy to a French *salon* (*à la* Madame Récamier or, in our days, *à la* Ma-

dame Mohl) that has ever been realized in Germany. If these ideal conditions no longer exist, on the other hand some advantages remain to German cosmopolitan society that are worth noting. If, for example, you meet a man of note or exceptional position, you have not to run the gauntlet of a crowd of middle-class nobodies—to steer through a miasmatic atmosphere of sycophancy—in order to get at him. The German middle classes have not yet taken to lion-hunting and its vulgarizing accessories.

IV.

In Berlin to-day the Duke of Ratibor unites the *élite* of intellect and science under his hospitable roof. Countess Schleinitz up till lately was a magnet that attracted and retained all that is eminent in the musical world. Postmaster Dr. Stephan receives the *élite* of Berlin society, as also do from time to time all the other Ministers. Prince Bismarck's receptions are, of course, familiar to the world at large.

Professor Helmholtz occupies an exceptional position, and in his home he is the centre of a circle which in the world of science could perhaps hardly be equalled for brilliancy outside the walls of Paris. Likewise the family of Mendelssohn has for generations past taken up a high social position in Berlin. From the witty contemporary of Frederick the Great downwards, this family has produced a succession of cultivated men and women. To-day the Mendelssohns are a centre of polite and intellectual society in Berlin.

The wealthy plutocracy, here as elsewhere, cultivate the aristocracy of intellect and of the fine arts as a

fashion, some vain vision of French *salons* of past days seemingly being the ideal they hopelessly strive to imitate. Besides the above, the wives of one or two celebrities of the world of letters hold receptions which partake of a cosmopolitan character. They endeavour to weld or fuse into a homogeneous social stratum the many characteristic elements Berlin society is composed of. The experiment is said to be fairly successful, but those who are best acquainted with them aver that a touch of Bohemianism pervades the whole: an exaggeration of stilted forms in some, flanked by a somewhat boisterous abandon in others—the whole producing the impression of a spasmodic experiment that is not indigenous to the soil. For behind all these Berlin efforts at social intermingling stalks the proud typical figure of Lieutenant v. Strudelwitz, who would be horrified if a celebrated musician or a literary magnate was seen in his house. To such as he—and he represents a distinct class—a man like Count Hochberg (brother of the wealthy Prince Pless) has soiled his escutcheon in accepting the superintendence of the various royal theatres, although by so doing Count Hochberg is in a position to influence the taste and culture of the public in as marked a manner as any six literary stars combined.

Lieutenant v. Strudelwitz is a type whose ancestral leanings may be traced in the direction of Mecklenburg, in that favoured duchy where, up till recently, a mild form of the cat, made of a good solid stick, now and then reminded the humbler inhabitants of the blessings of a patriarchal state of things. For there are even now authorities to be found who strenuously aver that the stick is not half so debasing as some of our more

civilized forms of punishment. Lieut. v. Strudelwitz's social ambition is the membership of the most exclusive club of the capital, the "Union," where gambling used to be indulged in by officers until young Prince William, now German Emperor, one day put his foot down in plain terms of prohibition. We should be justified in considering Lieut. v. Strudelwitz as a pure, unadulterated embodiment of the theory of the divine origin of the aristocracy *per se* if it were not for a suspicious hankering after the flesh-pots which he now and then shows by his unbounded admiration for English wealth. Not only the splendours of England's ancestral homes fascinate his imagination—that would be consistent; but the more tawdry splendour of four-in-hand clubs, of Rotten Row, with its fair and sometimes frail equestrians—these occupy his mind and make him sometimes regret that his proud ancestors were not a little more successful in hoarding the loaves and fishes of this world. Now, although Lieut. v. Strudelwitz is the pink of politeness and worldly *savoir faire*, he must not be confounded with another equally polished type of military manhood, who is his superior in everything that does not appertain to boot-polish and gold-rimmed eye-glasses.

Captain v. K. is of the Alexander Guard Regiment, quartered in Berlin. In him we have one of the finest types of the Prussian officer. He, too, is noble by birth, but not necessarily narrow in brain and sympathies in consequence. If he admires England, it is the history of England's greatness, the English character of energy, of manliness, that excites his admiration. He and his like invariably read, if not speak, English, and are

pleased to remember that it was a Scotchman whose history of Frederick the Great is the standard work on his country's greatest king.

Although he loves his profession, which he considers one that ought to be above the temptation of money-making and petty personal ambition, he yet is able to recognize the worth and honour that can be sought and found in every walk of life, however humble. If you refer to the privileges the aristocracy possess in the army, he will tell you it is at most a preference they enjoy, which, if not deserved by constant and unremitting work and attention, only goes for nothing. He admits the prefix of "von" does sometimes confer a preference, but he does not boast of it, but rather seeks to excuse it by quoting the number of his ancestors and his relations who from time to time have shared the darkest days of Prussia's eclipse in the service of the State.

Except in some instances of self-asserting plutocracy, German society presents one particular negative advantage. It is comparatively free from that restless vulgar cadging ("Streberthum") to be found in some countries.

The toady, the tuft-hunter, the vulgar pushing matron, if not unrepresented, are almost non-existent. Not that human nature is different there from elsewhere. The conditions are healthier in this respect. German society offers little temptation to the vulgar who bow down to show and wealth; a toady would seek in vain a profitable return for his efforts; and, lastly, rich heirs are too rare to reward the endeavours of intriguing matrons.

CHAPTER X.

WOMANKIND AND FAMILY LIFE.

Willst du genau erfahren, was sich ziemt,
So frage nur bei edlen Frauen an.

GOETHE.

I.

TACITUS—that supreme authority on the Germans of old—mentions in enthusiastic language their deference for their womankind. He also praises the German women for their severe chastity, in such striking contrast to the Romans.

Valerius Maximus tells us in reference to their chastity, that the Teuton female prisoners begged victorious Marius to allow them to devote themselves to the service of their holy virgin Vesta, assuring him they would preserve themselves unstained like this goddess and her priests. In consequence of his refusal, they all strangled themselves in the following night. Bearing in mind the brutality of those times, the fierce passions and reckless life of the men, this trait of the chastity of the women stands out in bold relief, as also the honour paid to them. In fact, the veneration in which their women were held by the Germans runs right through history; it is met with in the Middle Ages in the form of Virgin worship, and also in the sentiment of the Minnesingers—the singers of love. It runs through German poetry down to the present day. It is true that, in our matter-of-fact time, a little poetry goes to the wall; but neither do we expect to find the heroic virtue of German vestals so ready to run to self-immola-

tion as of old. Evil tongues have even been known to whisper that German womankind has not always had sufficient hatred for the enemies of their country to please their lords. In fact, many observers to-day fail to find that stern control of their feelings the old Roman historians credit them with. Perhaps the sickly kind of sentimental poetry of the last hundred years has had something to do with the development of demonstrativeness in German womanhood. However, no rule without an exception: the Germans of to-day are as loud as ever in praise of their womankind, and the testimony of a stranger may well be added to the chorus of praise. Madame de Staël, in her celebrated book, "*De l'Allemagne*," says:

"The German women possess a charm that is peculiarly their own, a sweet intonation of the voice; fair hair and dazzling complexion. They are modest, their feelings are true, and their demeanour is simple. Their careful education and the purity of mind that is natural to them, combine to make up the charm they exercise."

If we may judge the intellectual capacities of a race by the history of its greatest men, so we can gauge the moral possibilities of a people by the character of its greatest and noblest women. In this sense the Germans may well be proud of their womankind. For although the Salic law has prevented them producing rulers of the type of our Queen Elizabeth—except in the one splendid instance of Maria Theresa—yet women of German blood have before now played a giant's part in history. The Empress Catherine of Russia was a born German: Princess Auguste Fredericke of Anhalt-Zerbst.

She was a fine instance of the power of will and intellect, though she can hardly be said to stand as a model of female virtue. But German history shows a fairer figure than her, in Queen Louisa of Prussia, the mother of the late Emperor William. In her were united all the noblest characteristics of German woman-kind; and her example, stirring the soul of an entire nation in her time, may be said to be one of the brightest prototypes for the Germans of the future to dwell on and to live up to. It has even been stated that, without the moral purification which Prussian society underwent through the bright example of her domestic life, it is hardly possible that the rising of Prussia in 1813 against Napoleon could have taken place. An author of the period says of her:

“The consort of Frederick William III. was endowed by nature with everything that can be deemed charming in the sex. The fairest queen with a yet fairer soul: a whole woman in the words’ deepest meaning. No wish to participate in the rule of her husband was in her character, only devotion to his person, nurtured by love, the purest type of innocence and high womanly modesty; such were the principal traits in Louisa’s character, which were destined to form the happiness of the king and to be the model of a wife to the nation at large.”

Another author like the one already quoted, a severe observer of mankind, Herr von Lang, in his *Memoirs*, says of the queen: “She was in truth a woman who hovered like an ethereal being over us, in the form of an angel, with the sweetest persuasive powers with which she cast the rays of her lovely nature around

her, so that everybody was as if transfixed into a dream, charmed by this living, moving fairy picture."

This is high, yes, even extravagant praise; but it is fully borne out by every testimony of friend and foe, amongst the latter Napoleon and his councillor Talleyrand, who said of her: "I knew I should see a lovely queen; but I have seen the loveliest of queens and the most interesting of women."

II.

Next to history, the literature of a country affords us a clue to the character of a nation's women. At least, its poets show us what its ideals are like. The heroines of Walter Scott, Richardson's "Clarissa Harlowe," and, above all, the glorious creations of Shakespeare, are heirlooms to the end of time to show posterity what English womanhood resembled—in its purest ideality, perhaps, the rarest union of tenderness allied to strength of character yet revealed to man.

A cursory glance at the German creations of fiction shows a marked difference to those of our country. No purer, no fairer types has literature created than those of Goethe and Schiller, yet they are distinctly German; they are different from our own. Our ideal women show an independence of character that is absent from the German type. The German figure of poetry enables us to understand the national boast that there is nothing like German "Weiblichkeit" (womanliness). It is undoubtedly a splendid quality, and yet we cannot bring ourselves to consider its uniqueness as always synonymous with superiority to our own. Each type has its lights and shades, its strong as well as its weak

points. But to our insular mind the German ideal is a little too self-forgettingly devoted, too slavishly worshipping, not to make us feel a lack of that strong individuality we find, for instance, in women of Slavonic race.

There is something in the German ideal of womanhood that bids us feel their devotion, once given, leaves us no further fields to conquer. There is something in the English and Slavonic type that makes us feel it imperative not only to gain, but to retain, her devotion. Thus we are of opinion that English as well as Slavonic women hold their influence longer than their German sisters.

Goethe's Gretchen ("Faust") is essentially German in her simple-minded purity, but even more so in her childlike devotion, and, later on, in her remorse. Of Egmont's "Clärchen" almost the same may be said. They cause us to feel that it must have been easy to gain the love of such simple natures, and that we should have esteemed them lightly accordingly. And yet it is just this blind, simple, childlike devotion which looks up to an Egmont as a superior being that has the greatest charms for the German lover!

It is interesting to note of Fredericke of Sesenheim, perhaps the sweetest of Goethe's characters—for she was a living reality—that it was her rural simplicity that cooled the poet, or at all events enabled him to tear himself away from her.

In Lotte ("Werther's Sorrows") Goethe has given us another German type—the perfect housewife cutting bread-and-butter all round. She is thoroughly honest and true to her husband, yet she leaves us with a

suspicion that, if poor Werther had not shot himself, her friendship for him might have presented her with psychological doubts as to how she should reconcile it with her love to her husband.

If these female creations excite the admiration of the men, the lyric poetry of the nation has an inordinate influence over the budding female mind. In fact, poetic sentimentality fills them often with far too many illusions to meet the realities of life. For it is an instance of the strange double nature of the German character that, whilst their poetry is so sentimental, their conduct in daily life is in such marked contrast. Anybody can convince himself of the above by a glance at the numberless advertisements with offers of marriage (*Heirathsgesuche*) that are to be found in almost every newspaper, not only nowadays, for the custom dates back over a hundred years. These productions are strangely matter-of-fact, sober, and sensible in tone, the principal points in request being usually a little money and domestic virtues of manifold description.

To our mind, German girls lack that freedom our own enjoy, and, whilst the Germans are never tired of vaunting the virtue of their women, the slightest intimacy with the other sex, unless followed by immediate betrothal, is sufficient for gossip to lay hold of and discredit them. English women are said to be prudish, but in the art of feeling shocked, Gretchen beats her English sister hollow. At parties you can hardly dance several times with a young lady, or show a little preference for her, without gossip at once busying itself with its being a case of engagement.

This is a great pity, and is one of the reasons girls

are not brought up in greater independence of thought and character, and taught to look to their own energy as offering a possible career in life, outside wedlock. It is not only with us that women of the present day are often too anxious to get married to enable them to discriminate and choose wisely. On the other hand, we must admit that German girls are much less influenced by the hope of marrying money and position than the daughters of our well-to-do classes. This is all the more to their credit when we bear in mind that their men are much more anxious to marry money than our own.

The daughters of the poor aristocracy have a far greater horror of marrying beneath them than our aristocracy, for even money and luxury fail to overcome their traditional objection to trade. They will marry poverty in almost any form sooner than that. But, side by side with this prejudice, they possess the virtues of order and economy in a rare degree, and, as a class, they have contributed their share to the present greatness of Germany by being the mothers of the great majority of German officers.

III.

Whilst we, perhaps, carry too little sentiment into our every-day life, German women have a longing for more than they usually get, and it is one of their good points that their disappointment rarely takes an aggressive form. They soon get reconciled to the reality, and make excellent wives and mothers. In fact, if only half-way well treated, no truer, no more dutiful or better woman can be found. She may not rise to that in-

dependence of thought and conduct we now and then meet in our own country, but neither are her faults coloured by the qualities she lacks. If she be not noted for that sublime union of breadth and boldness of character added to womanliness we behold in some of Shakspeare's heroines, neither is she the fiery termagant, the secret drinker, to be met with elsewhere. Even if not particularly happy at home, her unselfish love of her family makes her submit to many things against which the women of other countries rebel, and instances of moral depravity are rarer than in almost any other country; for, if we are to believe tradition, Irish women in this respect carry the palm.

The circumstances of the German woman's life are not of a kind to produce those extraordinary instances of strong-willed initiative we meet with among our womankind. Her education is more homely, her life more restricted; the organization of German society does not give her a sphere of action such as many English women have found and shone in. Her life is comparatively uneventful, not to say monotonous, so that even her virtues, let alone her shortcomings, are tinged with the idiosyncrasies of her surroundings. But if she is inclined to gossip, if she often exasperates her husband by her exacting pettiness, and fails to impress him with that tact or dignity the French possess so pre-eminently, at the bottom she is honest, self-respecting, and reliable to a rare degree.

It is only among the German aristocracy and plutocracy that we meet with anything like the independence of English women. Also the women of the aristocracy are more cosmopolitan and less nationally typical than

others. They are more free from the trivial qualities above referred to; but, although superior in manner, they do not show so high a percentage of happiness in married life. Where the women of the middle classes gossip and sulk, those of the aristocracy rebel and intrigue. Divorces are very common, and it is not unusual to meet half-a-dozen divorced men and women at evening parties in large towns. The faults of the bourgeois are trivial and on the surface; beneath it the body is healthy, and a little more self-control and attention to details of manner would considerably add to their sum of happiness. All in all, the average of married happiness seems to be higher in Germany than with us, and several conditions seem partly answerable for it. Of these, perhaps the most prominent are the longer duration of engagement, enabling a better prior mutual acquaintance; the later age Germans marry at; and, lastly, the greater aptitude of average German women for household work and occupation.

In Germany the woman's place is at home: there she shines pre-eminent, self-sacrificing, devoted to her family. She is more domesticated than those of any other nation. It must have been an ungrateful, dyspeptic German husband who invented the saying, "Weiber und Hunde gehören ins Haus." *

Although in our days of luxury and pleasure-seeking the exceptions are many and daily increasing in number, yet, as a rule, German homes are centres of rare order, economy, and general comfort and happiness. And the

* Women and dogs should be kept indoors.

words of Schiller still apply to the German housewife:

Und drinnen waltet
Die züchtige Hausfrau,
Die Mutter der Kinder,
Und herrschet weise
Im häuslichen Kreise, &c. &c.

And even more than that, for although German husbands do not grant their wives that equality of companionship we witness in England and America, yet they share more of their husband's interests than the wives of the above-mentioned countries, and in this more resemble their French sisters. If her husband be deficient in the small considerations of every-day life, yet he turns to her for advice and moral support in all matters concerning the education of the children and affairs of business. She is a true mother to her children, and wields an influence over them that is, perhaps, only met with again in France.

Rising and about almost as early as her servants, she sets them an excellent example, she superintends their work, is invariably an excellent cook herself, and finds her happiness in her home activity. Although she exacts more of her dependents than we are accustomed to, yet she asks her servants to do little she is not able and willing to do herself, although her education fits her for the society of the best. Even if her servants be poorly paid, and only too often meagrely fed, they are made to feel a greater interest in the family than with us, and family festivities invariably include a greater recognition of the domestics than in our country.

Hence her influence is decidedly beneficial on her

dependents, the morality and happiness of whom are, we believe, above the average of the same class in our country. That the circumstances of life are happier with them, is seen by the few German servants that come to us who can be induced to stay, as high wages cannot make up for their isolation. The habits of thrift and industry and cleanliness of person, and the sense of self-respect among them are very strong, and lead to their becoming the useful wives of the working classes later on. As such they are in every way far superior to the same class at home. It is very unusual for a German servant girl not to have saved a round little sum of money towards starting housekeeping, and it is nothing very unusual to find them enter the married state with a trousseau of linen worth over £50. Thus, it is not surprising to find a far smaller percentage of the female lower classes engulfed in the pitiless waves of social ruin than in England.

If to our mind German wives may in many instances be considered little better than servants, on the other hand, they hold that our womankind inclines to luxury and laziness. There is certainly less of outward pretence in German families, and a far greater percentage of people in the middle classes living well within their income with something to spare than with us.

But as everything has its drawbacks, so the household work of the German wife is often the cause, that when you make your morning call and you are told the *gnädige Frau*—the gracious lady—will be with you at once, you have to wait half-an-hour till she appears; or the “gracious lady” has a headache, or is engaged at

her toilet, which often means that she is so hopelessly involved in household affairs that she cannot receive you at all.

IV.

Of German husbands, the poet Heine, in one of his vicious moods, said, "German married life is no true wedlock. The husband has no wife, but a servant, and he continues to live on in spirit his isolated bachelor life even in the family circle." We cannot agree with this, for in many respects the German husband is a model of a family man. He upholds the sanctity of the family tie in all its most important bearings, and as an anxious, conscientious father of his children he has few equals. Englishmen, who so often lose sight of their sons in their teens, can form little idea of the moral influence a German father exercises over his children, even after they have reached manhood.

On the other hand, in the small matters of everyday life, he is not always as appreciative of his consort's qualities as he might be. In fact, he is often unconscious of them, for, being brought up to expect so much, he has rarely the sad experience of what a curse a lazy, pleasure-seeking woman may become. And thus Bismarck's remark that "our wives are the only ladies we are rude to," has more than a passing meaning.

Notwithstanding the many ethereal qualities lovesick Germans credit their women with, once married, they generally become wonderfully sober and matter-of-fact. They know they are the stronger, and, except in

rare cases of good breeding, do not scruple to show it when their sensitive nerves are irritated. They are slightly inclined to bully and domineer, and direct contradiction, such as "that is not true" (*Das ist nicht wahr*), is not at all uncommon, and is thought nothing of. Nor do they like to be told that they are often responsible for the petty weaknesses of their women. On the contrary, they are nervously anxious that their helpmates should behold in their august countenances the effulgence of Jupiter Tonans, and recognize it to be their supreme function to serve and to obey.

There is a certain restlessness in the temperament of Germans that bids them devote much of their time to the exclusive society of their own sex, which they do in the beerhouses, of which the number and the extensive patronage is beyond belief. Germans of almost every position of life frequent these beerhouses, and those that are married invariably justify this habit by telling their indulgent wives that it is necessary for the broader intellect of man to seek sweet converse and animation in the society of their own kind. The interchange of ideas is important to keep themselves abreast of the great questions of the day. Those who have enjoyed the privilege of German beerhouse society are likely to hold a different opinion of the breadth and wealth of ideas that permeate the smoky atmosphere. However, the fact remains that German husbands spend more of their spare time in men's company without their wives than we do, and hence their women are much restricted to the company of their own sex. This is the more to be regretted when we bear in mind that the education of women in Germany is so excellent,

that it only requires such social fostering as they often seek in vain, in order to make their society the most interesting one could wish, ten times more healthy and entertaining than that of any beerhouse. As it is, ladies' tea parties, so-called "Kaffee Klatsch," restrict them to small-talk and petty gossip, and thus cause a want of breadth of view and feeling entirely unworthy of the excellent education they have received.

In this respect German husbands are often selfish, and rarely fight out that victory over their meaner nature by which an Englishman conquers his longing to spend an evening at his club, and submissively hurries home to a fireside, where he does not always receive an adequate welcome. For the male type of the silent sufferer (*der stille Dulder*) is much more common with us than in Germany. These remarks, however, apply more to the so-called better middle class; to the honour of the masses it must be said, that their wives share more of their company. In fact, they usually take their amusements, such as theatre-going, country outings, beer-drinking together. This, indeed, is one of the reasons why, though considerable beer-swillers, they so seldom get intoxicated. However humble the means, there are few working-men's families that have not got a little something week by week set aside for common amusement.

We have dwelt on the typical shortcomings, which, as everywhere, mark the majority.

The exceptions are also distinctly typical, and nowhere reach a higher ideal of happy family life than in Germany. Here we find sympathetic feeling blended with rare breadth of philosophic education and cul-

ture, skill in the arts, and delicate tenderness of heart.

An illustration of this is brought near to us, and in the loftiest social sphere, as all know who have read the Journals of our Queen. The little touches therein contained of family gatherings at Christmas, and on other occasions, are quite in the ideal German spirit; no less than the Prince's custom of allotting to each child a garden to be cultivated by its own hand, with the festival which was held when the products were by themselves cooked and eaten. This is simply an instance of the idea of the Prussian Prince learning a trade applied to the female side.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PHILISTINE.

Arrogance is a plebeian vice.

I.

WE have endeavoured to describe qualities that excited the admiration of Carlyle and many others. It is but meet to point to shadows, if only to set off the light.

Those who have heard of our national self-sufficiency after the battle of Waterloo, and those who can remember the truculent bumptiousness of the French chauvinist element after the Italian campaign of 1859, ought not to be surprised at any manifestation of national conceit in Germany after the victories of 1870. But it must be noted as one of the brightest sides of the German character that their best intellect seems to

have remained wonderfully sober in the midst of intoxicating success. This is particularly the case in the army and in diplomatic circles, whilst here and there it is surprising to see a knot of university professors showing more of chauvinistic ardour than of calm philosophy. Even the occasional big words of a Bismarck are invariably uttered with a purpose—as a means to an end. For though he may tell us that the Germans only fear God, we know that they fear a few other items besides—notably, Social Democracy and the Philistine spirit.

We can remember the rebuke administered to a man of letters who opined that the Germans would beat the French again. “You must not say that,” remarked a high Prussian officer present; “that is in God’s hand.”

Unfortunately, this humility does not characterize the German Philistine, who is largely represented in the community. In him the Germans originally typified the small citizen-class that has had no higher education; but his cast of mind is found present in other circles as well. His is that narrow, carping spirit, the existence and growth of which may be regarded as largely owing to the unhappy political condition of the past reacting on the weak sides of the national character.

German unity was never his ideal, nor has its attainment yet shown many signs of ennobling him. When the advantages enjoyed by other countries only served to instruct and urge on the efforts of Germany’s best intellect and character, the Philistine mingled his hatred (*Schadenfreude*) and envy with a cringing de-

ference to foreign superiority; and when that did not suffice, he had a little of those qualities to spare for the best men of his own country. The speciality of hatred termed "Schadenfreude" is essentially a Philistine German quality, and is untranslatable. It means the gratification of pent-up envy—the joy over the misfortune of those we had previously cringed to and envied. It is allied to a craze for grumbling (*das Räsonniren*) which was ever a Philistine virtue. And yet, strange to say, whilst indulging in these feelings with regard to everything around him, the Philistine has ever been the supporter of the old fossilized order of things.

When Aristides was being ostracised, an Athenian, who did not know him, asked him to mark his shell for him. "What has he done to you that you should wish him to be banished?" Aristides inquired. "Oh, I am tired of hearing him called the Just," the Athenian Philistine replied. Neither does his German representative of to-day like to hear any one praised.

In his temperament the querulous rowdy is ready-made. Yet his is the nature that makes his countrymen ridiculous by prizing and bowing to empty titles, whilst true distinction is beyond his ken. He alternates between loud aggressive arrogance and mean, cringing servility. To this class Goethe is a haughty aristocrat, and even poor Schiller a prig. To-day he sneers at Bismarck *à la* Metternich, and to-morrow he boasts that Bismarck is only the mouthpiece of such as he. Yesterday he sneered at the idea of the Germans presuming to beat the French, and to-day he talks of his countrymen ousting the English from South Africa.

A trait of his fretful sensitiveness leading to arrogance was illustrated the other day, when one of the fraternity received a communication from the Imperial Law Courts at Leipsic in which he was merely addressed as "well-born," whereas he opined that the title of "high and well born" was his due. He immediately stigmatized the omission as a "colossal want of tact," and paternal government, with an Argus eye for its own dignity, was not long in returning the compliment in the form of a fine of £6, or twelve days' imprisonment.

Another apposite manifestation of the Philistine spirit, well known and tolerated in other countries, has hardly done more than show its cloven foot in Germany. It did so at the accession to the throne of the present Emperor, when the Court shopkeepers of Berlin tried to present an address emphasizing their loyalty and devotion. Luckily, the attempt to gain signatures fell very flat; so that we may well hope this insidious form of Philistine flunkeyism will not take root in Germany.

II.

The patriotism of the Philistine is of a peculiarly aggressive and arrogant kind, yet windy and empty for all that. It has not even the misdirected concentration of French chauvinism, for indifference is mingled with hatred and conceit. This indifference, indeed, is the cause that he is not impressed, much less carried away, by military glamour: he only suns himself in it, as a cheap form of patriotism.

He speaks of the English as a nation of shopkeepers,* yet conveniently forgets that no part of Bis-

* To those Englishmen who know something of England having

marck's policy has earned such unqualified approval in the Fatherland as his endeavour to compete with the English as traders beyond the sea. He meets his boon companions in the beerhouse, and will enlarge on the enormous strides German commerce has made of late, being able to laugh at English competition, &c. He probably is not aware that the Germans are still a little way off distancing the English, but he forgets what he ought to know and remember—that a good many branches of German trade would be in a sad plight if it were not for those very English who keep them going with their orders, whilst almost every English product is kept out of the country by strong protective tariffs, that enable the Germans at once to oust them and to imitate them successfully.

He boasts of the enterprising spirit of German commerce, whereas the principal enterpriser in Germany is the State, whose competition in many ways cripples the initiative of the individual.

He rides home from his favourite beerhouse in a tramway car, started and financed by an English company; for several of the German tramways were started by English enterprise and capital.* When he reads that the English company has sold the concern at a good profit and it has been taken over by local capitalists, he reviles the sordid instincts of the English,

spent millions to abolish the slave trade in her colonies, and having ruined her West Indian colonies in the process, this universally current opinion on us as a nation is amusing. The true nations of shopkeepers are those who keep their shops open all the week, Sundays included, from morning until late at night, and whose families literally live in their shops: not the English.

* As also were formerly many German gas companies.

and is disgusted at the huge profit they have made out of the poor Germans. Yet, when this amiable individual insures his house or his life, the chances are he will do so with an English company, although the German institutions are perhaps to be preferred.

A favourite war-horse of the Philistine is his hatred of the Jews—not that dislike of the race which is shared by many high-minded people, who would never think of slandering them, or allowing it to influence their respect for individuals. No; his hatred is based on envy, because they succeed where he makes but a poor shift.

Macaulay said that the Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because of the cruelty to the bear, but because of the pleasure given to the spectators. The German Philistine feels much in the same way. He would fain be rich. He dislikes the Jews because they are rich. And yet the chances are that the Philistine will even take his daily opinions from a Jewish paper, and vote for a Jewish town-councilman, or member of parliament. He will even at a pinch employ a Jewish lawyer and call in a doctor of the Hebrew persuasion; in fact, it throws a lurid light on the helplessness of the Philistine, that the Jews—a foreign but homogeneous element—have gained such ground in their midst, notwithstanding all such hatred.

III.

Such is the inconsistency of the German Philistine; and yet, in the aggregate, he is a powerful animal for harm. He has given Prince Bismarck a lot of trouble in his time. He actually chuckles with delight when

the great man is irritated by the venomous onslaughts of Liberal orators. He gloats over the discontent of the working classes as evidenced by the spread of Social Democracy; he loves to exaggerate it and to foretell the ruin of the future. He does not know that the narrow-minded apathy and incapacity of his class is in part responsible for the growth of what he deplores. It is owing to his want of stamina and national feeling that the Social Democrats have had such easy play. Were it not for the energetic action of the Government, the Philistine middle-class might be speedily swallowed up by the former; for some of its characteristics have found a congenial field in the new movement—for one: the gospel of hate.

When Imperial measures are proposed that seem to curtail the privileges of his own petty Sovereign, he rails and throws himself in the breach, or, more literally, buries his head in his beer-mug and mutters his imprecations at Prussian arrogance. Not that his meagre loyalty will hold water, for in his own narrow circle he is the life and soul of opposition to the powers that be. He hates and detests the "beggarly" aristocracy, and sneers at its pretensions to refinement. And at the bottom of it all there is a sneaking fondness for the Austrians, and even for the French; for up till lately there was a Chinese wall of Philistinism between Prussia and some of the other States, where even to-day patriotism is yet a sickly plant!

Bismarck is reported to have said, "Germany is being ruined by the beer plague." And beer is indeed the spirit that inspires the Philistine, the beer politician *par excellence*! It nourishes his envy. He wonders

how much money his neighbours are making. If he hears that one of them is in the habit of having hot suppers at home, he spreads the report that he is living beyond his means. If he thinks the proprietor of his favourite beerhouse is making too much money, this is apt to disagree with him, and he and his boon companions will suddenly transfer their patronage to the opposite side of the street, in order to show mine host that, although he may have taken their money, he is nobody after all; for if anything irritates the Philistine more than the knowledge that anybody is making money, it is to have to admit the political success of an opponent! When a German member of Parliament told Bismarck that German unity had fallen like a ripe fruit into his lap—when Windhorst, the great Catholic parliamentary leader, told Bismarck that it was easy to do what he had done, with the Prussian army at his back—that sentiment found a ready echo in the Philistine heart right through the Fatherland. Slander is the favourite pastime of the Philistine, and the smaller fry of local lawyers are kept going by the endless despicable quarrels that boil up and overflow out of the cauldron of hate into the public press; for the laws against defamation of character are so vexatious, and at the same time so inadequate, that although you can hardly say an unkind thing of a neighbour but you may be made to pay a fine of three marks, yet you can indulge in a cataract of invective, and insidiously endeavour to ruin a person's character, and the law is almost powerless to give protection; for the Philistine originates as well as propagates slander. This state of things suits the temperament of the Philistine, whose delight is to

serve out his neighbour in a mean contemptible spirit. Thus, you can hardly turn over the leaves of the smaller provincial papers without "apologies" and "retractions" of the flimsiest kind meeting your eye. A common form is the following: "Herewith I withdraw my slanders against X, and warn everybody against circulating them any further." We translate the following three notices from the columns of one and the same number of the leading Saxon newspaper:—

"Declaration of Honour.—I regret the insults that I gave expression to, under excitement, with regard to Messrs. Naumann, hotel keepers, in Leutewitz.

"A. O. SEIFERT."

"We herewith withdraw the insulting remarks made by us with regard to Mrs. Ida Schetel, *née* Schulze.

(Signed) "R. BÖHME.

"H. BÖHME."

"L. Hoenig herewith withdraws the vilifications expressed by him with regard to the —— Club."

In Germany it cannot be said, "*De minimis non curat lex*"; also, it is to be deplored that the comparative cheapness and leniency of the penal laws pander to the philistine and other vicious instincts. The law, to our idea, tackles the individual too readily in trivial prosecutions, and in serious *delicti* its punishments are not severe enough. In this, there is too much humanitarianism. A form of crime very common in Germany—stabbing (often with fatal results) is treated far too

leniently. The policy of hanging a few to encourage the others would be efficacious.

The founders of German unity are under no illusions as to the dangers to which their labours are still exposed from the spirit of hatred, of envy, and of dogmatic pig-headedness in the Philistine. They fear it more than French battalions and Russian Cossacks. And well they may. It is widespread, and although not particularly demonstrative at present, it is by no means extirpated, much less powerless for harm in the future. It is doubly dangerous, as it even appeals to intellectual men on their weakest side—their vanity. Is it not on record that an eminent German professor, of European reputation, whose constant theme was a great and powerful Germany, hurried off in a fit of the sulks to Italy when once it came to be? Merely because his vanity was wounded, that it had not come about in his scholarly fashion. Men of this stamp are prone to hold forth on the sanctity of moral conviction, but fail to see the line that separates this quality from an exaggerated sense of pig-headed dogmatism and vanity! German vanity is a very different thing from French vanity, but it is none the better for that. If Bismarck had been possessed of more vanity, he would have also shown more consistency of the kind that passes current with the Philistines—the consistency of obliquity and greenness of vision!

Those very elements in Germany that were most obstinate in opposing Bismarck's plans are now the ones that are ever airing everything German, and rending the air on festive occasions with their appeals to every German virtue. A German steamer is wrecked in the

Red Sea, and aggressive newspaper articles hasten to reassure the public that such disasters will not influence the "civilizing" mission (that bit of French prostitution of language) Germany has o'er the seas. We have even heard it soberly stated that the German language is rapidly gaining ground in the United States! Such talk is not natural to the hardy Pomeranian or kindred men of arms, whose broken bones have furnished the cement of unity. Such stuff has been gleaned from the cosmopolitan windbags of other countries, and finds parrot-like currency among German Philistines. It has not even the merit of originality.

The Germans that go to the United States lose their national individuality, and that, together with their working capacity, goes to swell the great aggregate of the English-speaking race over there. Alas! for the vain hopes of the Philistine! Bismarck knows this, as he knows most other things—notably, the peculiarities of the German Philistines. He knows that, side by side with the great qualities of the nation, there lurks a good portion of paltry egotism in public as well as in private life. He is the one great man of his time, who has dared to tell his countrymen of their failings. We know of no other public man in any country who has had similar courage. But he could do it, and they have had to hear it, for they knew they could not bluster and intimidate the man of iron. And many like him all the better for this. They instinctively feel that he has earned the right to tell them the truth, though they are loth to admit it.

The late Emperor William, as well as Bismarck, felt that the social evils of the age will not be met by ap-

peals to the Philistine spirit, much less by any initiative from that quarter. This is why they strove to take the initiative, which so many doctrinaires condemn them for doing. Whether it will succeed the future will show, but it only wants an acquaintance with the Philistine to understand the attempt being made.

IV.

Although the Philistine is a coarse animal, he is yet a very sensitive one. For although education is supposed to refine outward manners, it is mainly owing to the Philistine influence that we meet coarseness and arrogance allied to a high standard of book education in Germany more than elsewhere. An average Englishman will stand any amount of blowing-up if he sees at the outset that he is in the wrong. Somehow common-sense tells him *that* is the main issue, and the blowing-up merely a natural consequence. Not so the German Philistine: you must not trespass on his sensitiveness, be he ever so much at fault; you must remember his dignity! Thus it will not surprise us to learn that the Philistine is devoid of humour. Over-sensitive people never have any humour. True humour is good-natured and does not mind being the subject of laughter. In his soft moments he is sensible to lyric poetry; mostly of a sickly, namby-pamby kind. In fact, it must have been a German Philistine recovering from one of his fits of the lyrical blues, who invented the national proverb, "In Geldsachen hört die Gemüthlichkeit auf" (in money matters there is an end of sentiment). A sober, utilitarian dogma, which cannot be beaten in the works of the late John Stuart Mill or of Professor Clifford.

But over practical utilitarianism the Philistine cannot afford to lose sight of the "ideal." So he has initiated a crusade against the use of foreign words in the language. Everything foreign must be extirpated root and branch! This would seem less unnatural were it not that, up till yesterday, the Philistine would have hailed the French or Austrians with open arms if they had come and given the Prussians a thrashing. But that was yesterday! To-day even the French language must be tabooed, and, if possible, discarded. A congress of card-players is held in Leipsic, and although it hesitates to banish "all" foreign denominations from the popular game of scat, it yet decides to do away with every term of French origin. The next thing they ought to do in a fit of egregious Philistine consistency would be to give up card-playing altogether, for cards are a French invention!

Naturally, such crazes find no footing in the army, where many denominations are French. In fact, a German army corps is a mighty German creation, although the name is French.

The recognition and adaptation of what is foreign is a two-edged sword. It may be a sign of mental breadth, but it is liable to go too far; with the Germans it has often verged on the ridiculous. The running amuck of the Philistines will not all of a sudden obliterate that fact. They are the people who till lately would accept nothing indigenous without strong reservations of "ifs" and "buts," whilst often taking a worthless article unquestioned if guaranteed English or French.

That the preference for what is foreign has been a

great failing of the Germans, is undoubted. The intelligence of Germany has endeavoured to derive benefit from its attention to foreign matters, whereas the Philistine has learnt nothing but the cheap art of ranting in unison with the beerhouse cry of the time.

V.

The far-sighted genius of Germany foresaw that the French would sooner or later endeavour to get the left bank of the Rhine. The Philistine saw nothing of the sort: he would even have preferred the rule of Louis Napoleon to the hegemony of Prussia. But Germany's leaders knew even more than that: they knew that, once the French gained the left bank of the Rhine, it would not take long to Frenchify it! The left-bank Philistine would not have taken long to assimilate; are there none living now who still remember the French sympathies on the left bank of the Rhine long after 1815! But God willed it otherwise, and to-day the Philistine is at liberty to impair his digestion and to muddle his brain with his daily mixture of beer and cheap patriotism.

The late Lord Lytton praised the Germans as a nation of critics. No wonder they have become celebrated in that capacity, for have they not one-half of the critic's functions—the quality of detraction ready-made in the Philistine?

CHAPTER XII.

GERMAN COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURE.

Nil sine labore.

I.

WE have suddenly awakened from the blind indifference with which only yesterday we regarded the commercial doings of Continental nations, and Germany's recent efforts to secure colonies of her own seem to be at the bottom of this. To-day our newspapers reproduce every item bearing on the development of German home and trans-oceanic trade, that is to be gleaned from our consular reports and other sources. Our politicians either trifle with ideas of fair trade, or clamour for general technical education, in order to put us on better terms of competing with the foreigner. In one word, public opinion is fairly aroused, and with it a doubt has risen whether our old laws and methods are sufficient to meet the commercial exigencies of the times we live in.

Side by side with our cry of alarm come the echoes of German cries of exultation to our ears. Their commercial success is trumpeted in every exhibition by the official world, and their press—united at least in this respect—indulges in vain-glorious boasting; more so than they have ever boasted of their military success. In fact, there is a German spirit abroad lately, that is aggressive in its sudden belief and assertion that everything German is the best. But those that give expression to it, must be regarded with suspicion. They are

not identical with the elements that have led their country to victory, but more with those who up till recently—like St. Peter before he went out and wept—were only too ready to deny their nationality again and again!

In view of this it is amusing to remember the stereotyped expression of such people when characterizing England's policy as "Krämer-Politik:" shop-keeper's policy! And to-day German public opinion, as expressed by their newspapers, literally shrieks in exultation at the imaginary prospect of following in our footsteps and tapping the mythical sources of colonial wealth.

But where there is so much noise and smoke—not merely fog—there must needs be some fire, and we will endeavour to point to some of it. One of our bugbears—the German colonies—we can dismiss with a few statistics, as far as their trade is concerned, the figures of which are not only comparatively small, but even show a marked tendency of further declining.

In 1884 the total imports from the West Coast of Africa to Hamburg, mostly palm oil, were valued at 133 million marks, and sank to 111 million marks (£ 550,000) in 1887. The exports from Hamburg thither, which amounted to 41,751 tons in 1882, rose to 56,000 tons in 1885, only to sink again to 42,000 tons in 1887.

From East Africa the imports to Hamburg in 1885 amounted to 2695 tons, in value 1,820,000 marks, and have since sunk to 1578 tons, in value 1,139,000 marks (£ 56,950). The exports from Hamburg thither were highest in 1883, with 2830 tons, and now, after a considerable drop in 1886, remain at 2241 tons in 1887.

The exports and imports from and to New Britain, the Marshall Islands, the Samoa Islands (which do not belong to Germany), and the German part of New Guinea, are hardly worth mentioning. The same applies to the trade of the other German ports—Bremen and Lübeck—with the German colonies.

Thus we see that its colonies have hitherto not been worth their cost to Germany, and we can only assume that Bismarck merely looks upon them as a means to an end—the fostering of the spirit of national self-consciousness by appealing to its cupidity and by stimulating production. As such, they doubtless serve their purpose and tend to quicken the national anxiety and greed for foreign trade generally. In fact, the indirect results of Bismarck's aggressive colonial policy have been enormous in the moral impetus it has given to the commercial classes.

Also protection has had very marked results in increasing home production, though some political economists think it is for a time only. The textile industries are already complaining bitterly; and, notwithstanding protection, the export of pig-iron, &c., has decreased during the first six months of 1888, from 741,391 tons in the corresponding six months of 1887, down to 584,217 tons, and the imports increased in the same time from 112,616 tons to 142,540 tons.

Even here protection may have done its duty temporarily by giving the Germans the start they wanted, though it may be unable to secure to them lasting advantages.

It is we and our own colonies that attract the German trader, and when we come to consider the immense

value the English home markets and our colonies have for the German producer—when we come to consider that it is only those broad views of commerce we hold that places them open to all the world, we think a little more modesty, not to say good-nature, on the part of Germany in speaking of England in commercial matters, would not come amiss. For whilst Bismarck has been amusing himself by humbling our Granvilles and snubbing our Kimberleys, we go on buying and paying for German goods with exemplary insular stolidity.

II.

There can be no doubt that the manufacture, export, and general consumption of German goods has increased enormously, in one steady rising tide, say for the last fifteen years. But quite as interesting as these undoubted facts are some of their causes, and with regard to these very hazy notions seem to exist.

It is not that we no longer alone possess the qualities that made us the greatest merchants and manufacturers of the globe: it is not that the mantle with these qualities has suddenly fallen on the shoulders of Germany, or that technical education, or that State assistance, or that protection tariffs, or cheap labour, either are, in themselves, the only causes of this high tide of German commerce, though they all undoubtedly have something to do with it.

The fact is, the conditions of trade have changed almost as completely as has the method of travelling since the introduction of railways. The spirit of enterprise, which was long our monopoly, has spread all over the world. The earnest honesty that delights in pro-

ducing the best possible article as a matter of pride, is ours still; the commercial aptitude in subdividing and controlling labour, is ours still; the splendid machinery in all branches of manufacture is also ours still; but these are no longer, as formerly, our monopoly. We have had too good a time of it in the past; we have been commercially spoilt, and hence have little experience of the trouble and effort it requires to wrest a market from the grasp of a rival, who has hitherto monopolized it. This task the Germans have had. Other nations, and especially the Germans, doubtless assisted by their excellent technical schools,* have learnt from us, and with this our supreme advantages under these headings, in the past, have gone from us, possibly for ever!

That all this means a comparative retrograde movement, there can be no doubt. That is to say, although our returns increase, they do not increase in the same proportion as those of other nations, who up to yesterday showed no export trade worth enumerating. This state of things has been held up both here and in Germany—here by alarmists, and in Germany by enthusiastic optimists—as meaning that the days of our commercial and manufacturing superiority are over. Nothing could be farther from the truth, as a little insight will tend to show.

* Not only their splendid colleges (*Polytechnikum*) for teaching engineering, chemistry, and physical science applied to commerce call for mention, but also their art-industry schools (*Kunstgewerbeschulen*). These are most numerous in the South, where in towns such as Frankfort, Nüremberg, Carlsruhe, Stuttgart, Pforzheim, Hanau,⁸ these schools have contributed to an extraordinary development in designing and particularly modelling, a speciality our skilled workmen are most deficient in.

To begin with, material advantages alone do not make a great commercial nation, or Austria and Spain or Turkey might be on a level with us, and the Germans would be nowhere. Breadth of character and conception go for a great deal—in fact, are inseparable from great commercial enterprise. All great commercial communities of the past have possessed a backbone of strong far-seeing character.

The lack of that daring necessary to successful trade is noticeable among the Latin nations, who have not the boldness to throw a sixpence out of the window that a shilling may come in at the door. Neither do they possess, in the same degree as the Germans and English, the discipline and character which are necessary to control labour. Hence these nations do not excel in the production of manufactured goods; and even in France it is peculiar to note how many great manufactories are owned by names of German origin.

In this particular the Germans are rivals we have every reason to take note of, but that does not say that they are likely to supplant us, notwithstanding their excelling us in the production of medium class goods. In the meantime, our sudden newspaper panic has provided them with an excellent advertisement wherever newspapers are read.

Some people aver that even now there are very few items the Germans produce that they do not owe their latest improvements to English or American ideas.

III.

We are aware that German commerce has invaded many domains hitherto more or less English, but that

is a long way off showing their being equal or on equal terms. This we doubt. Even up to the present day it is an open question how far they would be able to compete, if excellence of quality combined with cheapness were the only things in request. Unfortunately for us, they are not always the only points to be considered, and that brings us to the main explanation of Germany's success in foreign trade; it is to be sought and found not so much in the cheapness as in the superior "adaptability" of the German as a producer. As a German has ever been apt to lose his nationality and adapt himself more readily to the country of his adoption, so also in his manufacturing produce he has a greater talent for adapting his wares to the demands and taste of the hour than the more conservative Anglo-Saxon.

It is not cheap labour alone that can explain the latest trade successes of the Germans, for there are departments in manufacture in which our native trade has been partly ruined by countries where labour is far dearer than in our own:—witness the depression in the English watch trade, caused not by cheap German articles, but by the importation of American watches. The Swiss themselves were, it may be remembered, being beaten out of the field by the United States until they adopted the American system of manufacture. Do we not take our sewing machines from America still, although the Germans in their own protected country are supposed to manufacture a much cheaper kind? Yes, it is our own race—not the Germans—that in America often shows a greater skill in the utilization of labour-saving contrivances and control of skilled workmen

than ourselves at home. The two advantages the Germans possess are the cheapness of their labour, and above all their adaptability in applying it to the changing demands of the market.

In reference to the latter quality a glance at one single article of commerce might suffice, although so many present exactly the same instructive features. In days gone by the only beer to be found in India and the colonies was that of our well-known breweries. Our beer has remained the same, but our colonies and the Continent no longer drink it as before. The Germans have appropriated a large percentage of our export trade in beer, and even send year by year greater quantities to this and other countries.

How is this? Has the world suddenly discovered German beer to be better than English? This may partly explain, but it does not do so entirely. The fact is simply this, that whereas we have the same strong ales we brewed twenty years ago (of which Sir W. Gull once said, that nobody above the age of thirty ought to drink them), the Germans have in the same period completely changed and improved the character of the beer they brew. Not only have they availed themselves of the important discoveries of chemistry during the last twenty years, but many brewers send their sons* as apprentices to Burton-on-Trent, and pay high premiums to the leading firms to allow them to work there. These men are all technically and scientifically educated beforehand, and when they return home they introduce

* The sons of our manufacturers unfortunately rarely make themselves practically familiar with the work of others in their branch of business—a general custom in Germany. That they

all the latest technical improvements they have witnessed in England. Thus the Germans have already solved one important problem our brewers have attempted so far in vain; they can bottle their beer without sediment.

When the German beer-drinking public asked for dark Bavarian mixtures, the German brewer, from the North Sea down to within sight of the Alps, brewed the stuff they asked for, and called it Bavarian beer. Later on, when the light-coloured Austrian beers came into fashion, the same *volte face* took place. And now, that for the past few years the bright brown liquid of Munich itself has become the rage, not only have Munich brewers amassed colossal fortunes, but all over Germany imitations are concocted, which slyly introduced under similar trade-marks to the most celebrated Munich ones, quench the Teutonic thirst, and at the same time sail as close to the wind of fraud as the German "Reichsgesetz" (Imperial Law Code) will permit.

Another branch of trade, in which the Germans have made extraordinary progress, is the manufacture of pianos.* The most expensive and elaborate pianos in the world are made in New York, and the Germans have not been slow to adopt the mechanical improvements one by one as they appeared in America. Possibly many of them were the inventions of hard-working German mechanics in New York; in every case there can be no doubt that the Germans lost no time in casting the frame-work in one piece, and adopting

should work for a time in a menial capacity is, of course, out of the question.

* According to the *Cologne Gazette*, 7500 German pianos, and only 900 English ones, were sold in Australia in 1877.

one after the other all the little tricky mechanical improvements that go to make the best pianos what they are.

During all this time most of our conservative piano-makers have been content to revel in the unctuous satisfaction of being the *beati possidentes* of the richest market in the world. They (our piano-makers) allow heavy trade discounts to fashionable musicians who recommend their pianos and negotiate a sale, and in the meantime the grand pianos of Bechstein, Blüthner, and others have come over and invaded the concert-rooms, and divided honours, to say the least of it, with our own makers.

This is a most striking instance of the immense advantage the native characteristic of adaptability legitimately gives to German trade, and a most instructive one for us as showing how our lethargic self-satisfaction, plodding on in the dark, is often the cause of our losing our former pre-eminence. Our insular fault of systematically under-estimating our adversaries in trade, as in war, is one of long standing. It becomes doubly instructive when we bear in mind that one of the most important items in the manufacture of pianos is the quality of well-seasoned wood employed, and that no German firms could possess, by long standing, such stocks and resources in this respect to draw upon as several of our leading London piano-makers.

Textile industries supply another instance of the formidable character of German "adaptability," which is the more remarkable, bearing in mind our former supremacy. The textile industries are, moreover, the better suited to the Germans, as they enable them to

avoid one of the disadvantages German labour is said to be specially exposed to—namely, the tendency to produce inferior goods. In textile industries the supply can be strictly regulated by the demand. The plant of machinery is always, thanks to the excellent technical education in Germany, the latest and the best. With it can be produced the simplest and the most expensive and best goods, immaterial whether the works are situated in Barmen or Crefeld, or on the Polish frontier, where we have seen the finest wool spun from plant that came from Mühlhausen in Alsace.

And this is done in towns such as Crefeld, Barmen, and Elberfeld, which send tons upon tons of goods to England and her colonies. Cotton and woollen braids, silk and cotton galloons, bindings for tailors, Italian cloth, &c. &c., all find their way to our shores at the expense of Manchester and other towns. They almost monopolize the Chinese market with their medium quality of Italian cloth and satin de Chine.

This, not so much because they are cheaper, as because they are quicker and more dexterous in fitting their supply to the changing demands of the markets.

Whilst our carpet manufacturers continue making the old-fashioned so-called Brussels, Axminster, Wilton pile, styles and patterns, the German manufacturers, quickly discerning the modern taste for Oriental carpets, make excellent and cheap imitations of the latter, and send them over to us. In woollen, flannel, cotton, and silk goods the same quickness of adapting the article to the requirements of the day is noticeable, whereas our makers are often too conservative to make a pattern at variance with the character of their stock. For in-

stance, it is well known in the stocking trade that foreign shapes differ from our own, inasmuch as the sizes are larger in proportion to those of some other countries, whilst we are longer in the leg. It is very rarely English makers can be induced to make a special pattern to suit foreign trade: it does not pay them, they say. The Germans do it readily. The advantage they reap in this respect is very noticeable in trans-oceanic trade. Our consular reports teem with instances to prove this.

The British Consul at Paramaibo tells us: "The importation of hardware goods is, on the whole, satisfactory to British trade, but Germany is pressing very close on the heels of Sheffield by the production of wares which, being cheaper, are also not as serviceable, but are so polished, painted, and put up as to please the eye, and the difference in price leads many of the people in this colony to buy these goods in preference to the more durable English manufactured goods. Merchants would do well to look to the manner of placing their goods. A card of German scissors, cheap, and of the poorest material, nicely placed on a pretty card, and hung up in a shop-window, will attract attention, whilst the better and higher-priced English article, done up in a brown paper parcel and put away on a shelf as not being an article for exhibition in the window, will lie for years unsold."

The British Consul at Tangiers, in his report for 1877, tells us how a large trade has sprung up there in English paraffin candles. But already the Germans are at our heels, for they not only imitate our packages of these goods, but make special sizes and shapes to

suit the local consumers. In cloth stuffs the same readiness to fit the supply to the demand is visible, with the result that we now only succeed in supplying that place with material for the army.

The consular reports of South America supply us with the most interesting matter. The splendid *résumé* of Vice-Consul Thomas of Santiago (referred to in the *Times*, October 1887) is indeed instructive reading. He says: "If British trade with Chili has declined for the past twelve years, it is the fault of British manufacturers themselves, and that the Germans have under-sold and beaten us out of the Chilian market in a large number of articles of constant consumption in which we were formerly masters of the field. They make good medium and inferior goods, and measure the market with such accuracy that they are all promptly sold."

This accuracy in "measuring the market" brings us to note the great assistance German commerce derives from the action of their Government and its officials. A Government, which we are taught to believe, is only intent on turning its subjects into soldiers, in reality strains every nerve to assist the foreign trade of the country. Whereas with us hitherto we have not only let our commercial classes look after themselves, but discouraged consular reports, the German consular reports are collected and published all over the country. In England even a consular report can supply a handle for mean party warfare, and this instructive report of Mr. Thomas above referred to is only the result of a criticism in Parliament on a previous report of the same gentleman. No wonder our consuls shirk publishing what is only a means of getting them into hot water.

Our Foreign Office need not fear German annexations, but we cannot let Manchester have its way any longer as hitherto; our administrators must condescend to supply us with information, even if they decline to support our trade interests whenever they might legitimately do so.

We have been informed, that when the Chinese ambassador went to Berlin, even Bismarck himself "condescended" to try and influence him to place a large contract for steel rails with a German firm! And the inventor of steel rails, Sir Henry Bessemer, although a born German, lives in our midst!

Although the Germans hardly possess a shipping yard that could turn out a first-class ocean-going passenger steamer, they compete with us successfully as goods and passenger carriers. This is perhaps the most striking instance of all of their talent for "adaptability." They order their ships on the Clyde, and gauge so well what they require that their newest American liners can hold their own, if not even beat the best of our own in speed.

Since the North German Lloyd's has started a line of steamers to East Asia, they now compete successfully with the Peninsular and Oriental line. The *Sachsen* left Hongkong on March 20, '88, and caught the P. & O. steamer *Kaisar-i-Hind* at Port Said, although the latter had left Hongkong a week before the *Sachsen*. The average run of the *Sachsen* was 14½ knots an hour, whereas the P. & O. are only obliged by contract to steam 11 knots an hour. But not in speed alone does the North German Lloyd's compete with us: their fares are cheaper, and as for general comfort, a passenger, writ-

ing in the *London and China Telegraph*, of July 23, '88, tells us that the attention, cooking, and general regard for comfort are all that could be desired, and decidedly superior to the same items on the French ships on the same line.

IV.

Thus the capacity or genius of "adaptability," combined with an extraordinary concentration and earnestness of purpose, which ever shows itself down to the meanest details of commercial life, is one of the most striking causes of recent German commercial success. It is a quality that strikes the more readily, when we bear in mind that some great nations seem to be singularly destitute of it. The Italians, it is true, have of late shown great commercial energy, and many branches of manufacture have sprung up and adapted English, French, and German methods and models where they used formerly to rely almost solely on importation or inferior home-made articles.

But the French are an instance in point of a great producing country that rarely goes out of its way to seek models or ideas beyond its frontier. Subversive in politics, the French are wonderfully conservative in trade. They are patriotic to the degree of hardly seeming to wish even to profit by foreign enterprise. Their mission is to propagate their own *spécialités de fabrique*, as it has long been their privilege to promulgate their pet theories. Herein the French are in marked contrast to the Russians, who possess the capacity of adapting and assimilating to a remarkable degree. Although yet in their infancy as producers, another generation or two will reveal their powers of rivalry.

Not only in the quality of commercial adaptability is to be found the explanation of Germany's success. The patronage and support of its Government, so strange to our principles, we have referred to; the thorough commercial education of its merchants, its clerks, and the careful training and superior education of its workmen, supply us with additional evidence. Besides a complete theoretical commercial training, German clerks in their own country usually speak French and English, and a great number of those that come abroad have mastered Italian and Spanish as well. German merchants are to be found all over the world, taking rank beside our own. The training of their clerks can be seen in the City of London, where they oust the native element. Mr. Goschen has been criticized for saying that they took more pride in their work than our clerks do, and are more concentrated on it. But anybody passing the Royal Exchange at the moment one or other of our great races are being run for, and noticing the enormous crowd of City men congregating to hear the result, can look for himself whether there are any Germans among them!* They are distinguished by sobriety, industry, and intelligence, and make these qualities imperative in those that would compete with them. This is the case particularly in England and the United States, and is becoming so in South America, Japan, and in our colonies more every day.

In these points we are at a disadvantage; as in thrift, hard-plodding commercial training, let alone the

* The great proportion of foreign (mostly German) firms in the City of London is well known, and is in so far explained by their close attention to business.

knowledge of foreign languages, our commercial classes are distinctly inferior to theirs.

We are thoroughly alive to the excellent qualities of the much maligned British workman, but his defects and his disadvantages tell more against him and us now than before.

We do not condemn trades-unions; in a country believing in the gospel of Manchester they were an iron necessity of self-defence, but their conservatism and the obstinacy of their policy, by which they oppose every innovation, has often done us more harm than their demands for high wages. Also the want of thrift, of self-respect, inseparable from the lower education and meaner social standing of the British workman, handicap us sadly, though this is being improved. These items go a long way towards nullifying other advantages we undoubtedly possess. We think it was the late Mr. Brassey who gave it as his opinion that the British workman more than earned his higher wages by the greater value of his labour. That may still hold good of unskilled manual labour, but in all kinds of labour that are influenced by education and by the moral character of the workmen, our working men cannot claim any superiority, either over Germans, French, or Italians.

From the foregoing it will be readily understood that the cry for technical education, which we hear on all sides, will not suffice to counterbalance many of the advantages over us the Germans undoubtedly possess. But, even bearing these in mind, we think the notions that prevail in Germany with regard to their latter-day commercial achievements are exaggerated ones.

V.

In general, it may thus be said that a certain lack of originality of taste and production in commerce goes hand in hand with their skill in adapting the ideas of others, if the one be not actually an outcome of the other. It is not likely that they will be found to agree with this statement, but it is one that can be proved up to the hilt, over and over again. Their new Patent laws, which are excellent, provide efficient protection for their ideas, and yet we seldom come across a patented practical (*i.e.*, commercial as distinct from scientific) invention in Germany, but it turns out to be of English or American origin.

The sudden prosperity, or rather habit of money-spending, that set in after '70 caused a great increase of production everywhere, but brought forth little taste and next to no originality. Everybody went back to the past for models—to the Middle Ages for metal work, in which the Germans ever excelled; and to the periods of renaissance and rococo for many other branches of production. There was certainly some explanation for this turning to the past. It was a time of national excellence in art industry. Yet even in those days the good Germans were slavish copyists of the Italians, except, perhaps, in the one solitary instance, when Marc Antonio (Raimondi) pirated the engravings of an Albrecht Dürer.

But this gleaning from the past did not stop half-way and adapt itself to modern requirements. It often became ridiculous by slavishly reproducing the old angular unpractical designs of bygone ages.*

* Architecture must be excepted from the above strictures. Here,

Assisted by their excellent trained designers, the Germans have made great strides in the manufacture of furniture. Also the importation of French furniture—a large business formerly—has almost entirely ceased, whereas the Germans now export largely to France and elsewhere. Their success in this, as in several other trades, has been assisted by the many German skilled workmen who were in Paris before '70, and have since returned to their own country.

The best furniture makers of Berlin, Mayence, and Stuttgart produce excellent goods, and little can be said against them on the score of solidity of workmanship or price. But, whereas the English endeavour to combine lightness with solidity, the Germans, here as elsewhere, are noted for a heavy awkwardness of style, for which even the excellent carving and turning of some of their work offer no sufficient atonement.

Leaving out the fields of science as before mentioned, we are of opinion that, besides want of originality, the German possesses little practical ability or taste as a producer.* It is very rarely you meet with an article in Germany that is practically fitted for the end in view.

A glance at the German pottery trade will bear this out, for even their excellent schools for designers have

as elsewhere, where the greater trained artistic faculties come into play, the Germans generally excel.

* It must, however, be admitted that this want of practical ability, noticeable at home, does not appear among Germans abroad. They soon adopt English and American practical methods, and even excel in them, as also as inventors. Sir Henry Bessemer, inventor of steel rails, is, as said already, a born German, and above all Sir William Siemens should not be forgotten.

not as yet been much use to them in this branch of production.

Although Germany was the first country in Europe in which china was made, it has long been distanced in its production by France and England. Dresden and Berlin, the two oldest manufactories in Europe, with all the prestige of Royal origin and Royal initiative, have done little else than live on an old reputation, and that reputation of a second-rate finikin kind. Both these factories, except for the curiosity of their old models of rococo figures, surely at best a trumpery application of the ceramic art, are simply nowhere. And yet these antiquated styles are the staple fund of inspiration of the numberless fancy china makers all over the country, particularly in Saxony. They are copied to death, down to the vilest imitations. The old pieces of Dresden, Berlin, &c., as being unique, have an antiquarian *bric-à-brac* value in the eyes of collectors; but if nowadays an elaborate dinner service for a thousand guineas, or an expensive presentation ornament is wanted in the world's market, it is usually ordered of an English or of a French factory. The French factory at Sèvres even to-day produces works of ceramic art that are far beyond anything Germany has ever produced. That the productions of Sèvres in the past were artistically incomparably superior to anything Germany ever attempted, is too well known to require substantiation.

The potteries of Silesia and Bavaria find a large home market for their goods—thanks to Protection—although they are mostly clumsy in pattern and coarse in material: in fact, very inferior to the Austrian same class article. But a large amount of the better class

pottery used in Germany is made in Luxemburg, in Sarreguemines, as well as imported from France.

It is interesting to note that in this special branch of manufacture, in which the Germans had the first start of all others, and in which they have long been renowned for cheapness, they have not succeeded in point of excellence—a fact sufficiently proved by their inability to supply the best foreign market with articles for use or for ornament to any appreciable extent. They do a large business in pottery with America and England and the Colonies, but almost only in medium and inferior goods.

We can distinctly trace the benefit the Germans derive from their excellent trained designers to be confined to those industries where artistic conventional ornamentation alone is required. From the moment the article wanted is one in which the designer is required to adapt his artistic knowledge to the production of some original, practical design, he generally fails. In this respect, the national art industry schools have hitherto helped him but little. This want of practical ability is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the German instinctively turns abroad for practical models as well as for ideas, and is forced to import a quantity of articles he is unable to produce.

The want of practical ability in the nation is abundantly proved by the almost mediæval character of their beds, with those dreadful feather counterpanes (*plumeaux*), and also by their strange regardlessness of the laws of health in the lack of ventilation in their houses.

Although we hear so much about the cutlery of

Solingen and their barefaced imitations of English goods, it is a fact that a large proportion of German carpenters, locksmiths, cabinet-makers, &c., use English-made* tools. It was reserved for an English cheese-paring Government to order the swords for its cavalry in Solingen, with results that are as well known as they are instructive.

One of the largest tug steamship companies of Germany, the "Kette," on the Elbe, has to employ English labour for soldering the tug-chains it uses, or to get them soldered in England.

VI.

We have endeavoured to point to some instances in which German commerce has fairly competed with our own, even when profiting by and copying our methods. We must now take note of some instances in which their talent for "adaptation" leads to downright piracy, and even fraudulent imitation. Not that we intend to reproach the Germans as a nation with the dishonesty of sections of their traders, or think them less scrupulous than ourselves. The fact is, our laws were hitherto too lax, and the Germans too quick to avail themselves of their laxity. We should do the same if the conditions allowed of our doing so with success.** We know too well that a certain percentage of humanity of every land and clime is equally ready to turn an "honest" penny by doubtful means. And when we are

* A large number of agricultural implements are imported into Germany from America. They are less clumsy, more serviceable, and cheaper than the German article.

** On p. 268, note, we supply an instance in point.

able to turn German ideas to account without paying for them, we do it as readily as they; witness our piracies of German theatre pieces, and of other property of an intellectual or artistic kind. Still, it is the duty of our laws to check where we cannot change the sordid side of human nature; and, bearing this in mind, it is not without reason we state the opinion that the German talent for adaptation, for producing colourable imitation, and their great want of originality in commerce, place their manufacturers in stronger temptation than our own to seek their designs, their models and patterns in other countries, and thus occasionally to trade on the ideas of others, to a degree that is as astounding as it is stoutly denied in the Fatherland.

Not only this, but the loose construction of the German laws for the protection of trade-marks and designs (*Musterschutz*) is very often productive of injustice among themselves as well as to the foreigner, which can never have been contemplated by the high-minded men who framed them.

If their Registration system does not work wonders in protecting their own "geistiges Eigenthum" (*anglicè*, mental property) among each other, it is not surprising that it affords little protection when the "mental property" pilfered hails from beyond the sea—namely, from England.

The commercial envy which is such a living quality among large sections of the population of the Fatherland, comes to assist the interpretation of laws perhaps too loosely defined, and the English complainant is generally non-suited.

VII.

A case of imitating the trade-mark of the well-known English cotton-thread makers, Brooks Bros. (a goat's head), is still under consideration before the Leipsic law courts.

The German adaptations in the cutlery trade were the subject of lengthy newspaper discussions during the past year. Among numberless other cases, the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* of April 2, 1887, gave facsimiles of German (Solingen) imitations of Messrs. John Nowill and Sons' celebrated cutlery. The packages were identical, with the exception that Nowill was spelt "Nomill," and Sheffield changed to "Shemfeld." If such manœuvres be sufficient to steer clear of the charge of intentional fraud in the German law courts, all we can say is, it may be law, but it is not our idea of equity!

The following extract from the *Engineer* will be read with interest:—

"Importation of British Marked Goods.—There is no mystery about the importation of British marked goods from abroad. The Custom-House authorities, although anxious enough to do what is right in the interests of just trading, have managed by one of their General Orders, dating back to 1883—which came into force in January 1884—to arrange their regulations so as practically to favour the foreigner. By the 39 & 40 Vict. c. 36 (1876), it was prohibited to import goods bearing any name, brand, or mark of English manufacture. This section was altered in 1883 to 'name and brand,' 'name and place.' Acting under this order, the Customs authorities decline to notice such goods as do not bear both name and place, or name and brand,

though the marks put upon them point directly to intent to deceive. For example, goods may come in marked 'Brown's Steel,' or 'Joseph Rodgers and Sons' Cutlery,' though not an ounce of the steel was made by Brown, and the cutlery was never inside the famous 'No. 6.' A Sheffield steel firm, finding that their steel was being imported into this country marked '—'s steel,' brought the fact under the notice of the Custom House. They contended that, their name being a registered trade-mark, the goods ought to be seized on importation. The Custom House decided against them, and forwarded a copy of the General Order. It would be interesting to know why the provision of the Act of 1876 was overridden by this General Order, which seems to have widely opened the door for fraudulent dealing. Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but this class of compliment is expensive."

The far-famed name of Rodgers is also imitated as "Rotgens" along with the firm's mark of the Maltese cross and star.

Another remarkable instance in the case of Curtis and Harvey's gunpowder, the descriptive label of which has been closely imitated in both colour and design, the only difference being that the name Curtis is spelt "Cubtis," and the name Harvey is spelt "Marvey," but so printed that to a foreign purchaser the changes would be hardly noticeable.*

* The above facts are partly taken from the evidence of the Select Committee on the Merchandise Marks Acts (1862), published in September 1887. And it is only fair to note that it disclosed evidence of English cutlers stamping their razors "Warranted Hamburg ground," and other proofs of our contention that honesty of unrestrained human nature is much the same everywhere.

Now, although an Act of Parliament was passed last year that makes the importation of such goods no longer easy, still our colonies are, as before, open to them. This shows our culpable neglect, when passing the Merchandise Marks Act, of not getting the co-operation and adhesion of India and our colonies. Colonial merchants will often buy the greatest rubbish, and now that these fraudulent imitations can no longer be shipped from British ports, we lose the carrying trade as well. There ought to be no time lost in rectifying this state of things, if possible.

Another instance of imitation, although not of a fraudulent character, may be mentioned here.

A little town in Saxony (Wurzen) does a large business in fancy biscuits. Although the name of Huntley and Palmer is not used, the denominations, the packages, and the very articles themselves are imitated exactly, and sell all over the country, whilst the importation of the original article is hampered by a Protective duty. We must even be thankful if the imitation does not oust the English-made biscuits from our colonies.

Besides the articles already referred to, we could cite many others. The Germans copy the water-marks of our best paper-makers, they even imitate the packages and denominations of our fancy note-paper. Birmingham steel pens likewise claim their attention. Our fancy soaps and all sorts of perfumery are but stray items picked out at random among an endless catalogue of piracy. But the worst that can be said of German productions they have said themselves—namely, that their goods are sold as English; thus they are admittedly imitations and not original.

If we look closer at German manufacturers, we find that they fail uniformly to reach the highest standard to be met with in this and other countries. Also the large importation of their goods has had a deteriorating effect on the public taste, though it has, in many instances, put our own makers on their mettle. They have made the public and the producer consider cheapness before everything else.

Besides copying the English, they honour other nations with equal attention. Whatever is brought out in Vienna in the special trades the Viennese excel in—fancy bronzes and leather goods—is immediately copied in Offenbach and elsewhere.

American sewing machines are kept out by German imitations. The so-called *articles de Paris* of the past almost all hail from Berlin now, even including an enormous trade in ready-made costumes. Not that there is anything illegitimate in this; but they even adopt the French names and styles of perfumes, of the celebrated liqueurs “Benedictine” and “Chartreuse,” and sell imitations in bottles—exact copies of the French article. But the list is practically inexhaustible.

It seems strange, indeed, that in a country whose officials are such models of high-minded rectitude and duty, whose thinkers and men of science stand so high, such slavish imitations in commerce should be so common. For it is mainly in certain fields of commerce, that are closely allied to science, such as chemistry, electricity, and the manufacture of scientific instruments and artillery, that the Germans excel. In chemistry they have made some of the most remarkable inventions in our time, only to mention salicylic acid, saccharine, &c.

Also their chemical factories, and those of Austria, are legitimately beating us in this branch of commerce. In these instances doubtless the natural bent of the national mind for science and their unrivalled technical schools go for something, whereas, in so many other branches, they are little better than imitators of an inferior but earnestly painstaking kind. It is hard to have to say that the people who gave mankind the greatest discovery of the age—the spectroscope of Kirchhof and Bunsen—are the arch commercial pirates of our time!

Some years ago the Prussian Government sent Prof. Reuleaux as their commissary to report on some distant international exhibition. On his return he startled the Fatherland with the verdict that German goods were distinguished by being uniformly cheap and nasty (*billig und schlecht*). This created a great stir at the time, and may have been a somewhat exaggerated verdict; but there was some truth in it, and matters have not materially changed since, although many patriots fondly pretend that they have.

It is not that the Germans are alone in producing rubbish—every commercial nation does the same; but the Germans have a special faculty for copying the rubbish of other nations, besides producing their own.

VIII.

Besides imitating everything foreign, whether an idea or a mere pattern, the Germans trade on each other's ideas to an extent that is perhaps unequalled in the world. In fact, were it not for the restraining influence of their somewhat unpractical "Musterschutz" laws, it would be even worse than it is.

Hardly has a certain "brew" of beer gained public favour, than other brewers adopt as similar denominations as the law will admit. The Munich beers are all the rage now, and although the law prohibits the direct advertisement of Munich beer when the decoction hails from Berlin, the brewers get round it, by advertising their product as brewed according to Munich "manner" (*Münchner Art*).

Some years ago a certain Dr. Jaeger travelled about the country holding lectures to popularize his system of woollen clothing, and recommending patterns of his own design made by a certain Stuttgart maker. His propaganda created a great demand for the article, which was at once copied by several rival makers, who adopted his designs and denominations.

Although not strictly commercial, the following is *à propos*. Some years ago a delightful sketch of Berlin middle-class town life, "Die Familie Buchholz," by Julius Stinde, achieved great popularity and ran through many editions. It will scarcely be believed that the very title was pirated by a compatriot—not by an Englishman or a Frenchman—and a book was offered to the public under the title of the "Buchholz Family in Paris!"

We have already referred to the Offenbach imitations of English and Viennese leather goods patterns; for the Viennese are far ahead of the Germans in fancy leather goods,* as they are also in artistic bronzes. But it does not stop here; the Berlin leather workers

* The above, although strictly true, may need some qualification, inasmuch as the South Germans are lately producing goods in embossed leather which need fear no comparisons.

copy the Offenbachers, and undersell them in the cheaper German home market. The manufacturers of Offenbach evidently think there is nothing like leather, for some of their leather goods are among the few German articles that seem fairly able to compete with English-made ones, and the trade between Offenbach, England, and America is very large indeed.

In jewellery a novelty is brought out in Hanau—as often as not the copy of an English or French idea—and is hardly shown to the German trade as “the newest thing out,” before it is already copied on a cheaper scale in Pforzheim and hawked all over the country. The French, as is well known, only allow one standard of gold for jewellery—namely, that of 18 carats. The jewellers of Hanau and Pforzheim set no limits to the alloy they employ, many of their articles hardly deserving the name of gold at all.

As in gold, so in fancy silver-work. It is of a much lower standard than our own. The designs are as clumsy as the material is generally thin and poor. The styles are mostly slavishly adapted from mediæval or old rococo designs, if they are not of late borrowed from military ornamentation and emblems, and are devoid of grace and originality. Fortunately, our silver hall-mark law prevents the importation of cheap German silver goods, a blessing to be devoutly thankful for.

German silver-plated goods have long had a bad name, but it will be news to many that, notwithstanding the continuous beating of the patriotic tum-tum, the Paris house of Christofle exports a large amount of plated goods to Germany. This house has one of the finest shops in Berlin, and probably does a larger busi-

ness in Germany than any half-a-dozen German silver-plate manufacturers combined. Even in this second-rate branch of trade, if we take the precious metals themselves as first-rate, the Germans not only fail to compete abroad, but cannot hold their own at home.

Yet cheapness and underselling are their main resource. Cheapness is the explanation of the tons of English printing done in Germany. And partly also this applies to colour printing, oleography, &c., of which waggon loads come to this country from Leipsic. The Kate Greenaway style has been worked out in Germany. Though in these specialities a qualification must be made. The technical excellence of the German work, it may be said, goes hand in hand with cheapness in this particular instance.

The process of copying and underselling each other is observable in almost every German trade, and produces a keenness of competition often of a kind that is far from elevating.

No wonder the Germans are continually complaining of over-production. But, as the only thing that is eternal is change, so the Germans may well look forward with hope to the future as likely to bring them more independence of ideas in commerce, as our time has already brought them national independence. The consciousness of the latter must, sooner or later, react on their manufacturing industry, but it will not do so in the short space of time it was expected. A nation that for generations had been accustomed to look abroad for many things besides manufactured articles, cannot all of a sudden create an original supply for its wants all along the line.

In the meantime, it must be a source of gratification to all well-wishers of the Fatherland, that the splendid penal laws against adulteration of food have preserved this one vital branch of human production in Germany from the scandalous manipulations we constantly witness in our own country and in America.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GERMAN PRESS.

Er lügt wie gedruckt.*—*Popular saying.*

I.

JUNIUS was of opinion that Englishmen should sooner give up their Parliament, the responsibility of their Ministers, the Habeas Corpus Act, even the right of taxing themselves, than surrender the freedom of the press; for that alone would bring back all these boons.

Many Englishmen would be prepared to subscribe to that even now, but few Germans. They fear the power of journalism, but, as a rule, do not respect it. Not that the German press is one whit less honourable and self-respecting than our own, but the German temperament does not look upon "print" with the same awe that we do. As shown by the popular saying, "He lies like print," the critical German mind instinctively feels with Bismarck, when he said in the Reichstag, February 6, 1888:

"As far as the press is concerned, I cannot attach any decisive weight to it. They say in Russia it means

* He lies like print.

more than in France. I am of the opposite opinion; in France the press is a power that influences the decisions of the Government; in Russia it is not the case, nor can it be; but in both cases the press is, in my eyes, only printing-ink on paper, against which we do not war. For us there can lie no challenge in such materials. Behind every article in the press there is but one individual, who handles the pen in order to publish this article to the world; the same in a Russian paper—let us assume it is an independent Russian paper that is in connection with French secret funds, that is perfectly immaterial. The pen that indites therein an anti-German article, has nobody at its back, but he who holds it in his hand, the single individual, who produces this lucubration in his study, and the protector that a Russian paper usually possesses, some high official who has got entangled in party politics, and who perhaps happens to grant this paper his protection, both weigh but as a feather against the authority of his Majesty the Emperor of Russia.”

The above sentiments, not only Bismarck but Germans in general apply to the press of every country more or less, and hence the German press never had, and never will have, the power the press wields with us. This leads us to believe that the Germans as a nation are much more mentally phlegmatic than ourselves. Although perhaps more nervously irritable and excitable in some ways, their judgment is more sober and placid; they think more for themselves than we do.

A German will read a violent newspaper article, and, instead of being carried away by it, like one of ourselves, will say to himself: “That is written by that

virulent rascal X; what can be the matter with him to-day?" On the other hand, he will casually read a journalistic opinion at variance with his own from mere intellectual curiosity, where an Englishman will studiously avoid reading any paper but the one holding his own views, and will generally blindly adopt the views of his favourite paper, even if they happen to differ from his own. The German reader retains his independence of judgment far more, and will unhesitatingly stop taking in a paper whose views no longer suit him.

The late Emperor William could never again be induced to look at the *Kreuzzeitung* after it had once taken a line that offended him, though this single act was strangely at variance with that great and good man's character, always so free from every personal feeling of resentment.

The Berlin *National Zeitung*, for instance, in one day lost thousands of readers when it adopted a line of its own that did not agree with their views. The journalistic tactics that are so common with us, of advocating what we previously opposed, are decried in Germany, and looked upon as proofs of want of principle (*Mangel an Ueberzeugung*). A newspaper that avowedly changes its views with, or in advance of, the current of public opinion, would wield little influence in Germany, its opinion would not command respect or weight. The journalistic ambition of shaping public opinion—admirably as it works in this country—does not succeed there.

In their anxiety for "conscientious conviction" Germans often are exaggerated and unpractical, and

become *Principienreiter*—i.e., men that ride about on a broom labelled “Ueberzeugungstreue” (Fidelity of conviction!). The Liberal politician who before the battle of Sadowa had dared to hint at the possibility of Bismarck being in the right, was morally a dead man. The same fate awaited him who twelve years ago dared to find fault with the notorious May Laws against the Roman Catholics that are condemned to-day by all parties!

Also, they carry far more personal feeling into their political opinions than we do, and journalists of opposite ways of thinking are not always ready to give their opponents that credit for honesty of purpose we invariably concede, except in reference to Irish affairs. In the latter we come very near to German virulence and invective, as to which the following is an example taken at random from the next papers at hand.

A polemic between the Democratic *Frankfort Gazette* and Bismarck’s organ, the *North German Gazette*, yields the following amiable buds of rhetoric:

“When some weeks ago the *North German Gazette* undertook to cast a vile aspersion on the *Frankfort Gazette*, and we in return accused that sheet of shameless lying, the voluntary Government organ quietly pocketed the accusation. We were not surprised at this, as there is no accounting for tastes. Still we could hardly have expected that the *North German Gazette* would have the barefacedness to bring up that same lie again!”—(Extract *Frankfort Gazette*, July 24, 1888.)

Pretty severe this, but the *North German Gazette* had aggravated its original aspersion by coolly stating that the *Frankfort Gazette* was not a German paper at

all! Now, as that influential journal is the property of a Jew, that was distinctly hitting below the belt, and calculated to exasperate the party receiving the blow! Bismarck's own organ, the *North German Gazette*, seems to have a rather lively time of it, for almost on the same day we find the ultra-Conservative *New Cross Gazette* declaring it to be "impertinently arrogant," "untruthful," and again "impertinent"!

Yes, political partisanship in the press is very violent in Germany, the Prussian Conservative papers, in their blind hatred of everything Liberal, attacking even those harmless and charitable convivialists, the Freemasons. The Liberal and Democratic press become figuratively black in the face at the mere reference to a Prussian feudalist, and, sad to say, many are the journalistic elements in the Fatherland who would welcome a humiliation to Bismarck, even if it included an injury to the country. Thus party politics show no more amiable characteristics in Germany than with us.

Bismarck's estimate of the press has been referred to, but in its manipulation he shows his usual skill. The master mind, that has used all parties and in turn cast them in the shade, plays sad havoc with German journalistic conscientious fads. He drives his opponents wild. He uses his press organs either to coax or to threaten, to butter or to bully, to draw a red herring across their path, or to set up a scarecrow in their fields. It is all the same—it invariably answers the purpose he has in view.

Some few years ago all Europe was kept in a state of anxiety by a general cry of the German Government press that the Russians were massing troops on their

eastern frontiers. To-day all is silence or sugar on that subject, and although not a Cossack has since been withdrawn from the frontiers, any paper venturing to hint at Russian troops would be roundly accused of either trickery or want of patriotism! "That is how it is done," as a popular conjuror used to say at each fresh feat of sleight-of-hand.

Now and then, lately, they see through it, and when the *North German Gazette* is unusually "rampageous," and the *Cologne Gazette* joins in, it is generally understood that the tum-tum at the village fair is being beaten. Something is coming, and soon, we shall be invited by the "strong man" at the booth to hurry up, pay our pennies, and see him throw his hundredweights in the air, swallow fire, and otherwise prove again and again that he is the strongest man alive, and the rest of humanity mere blackbeetles.

II.

Thirty years ago our press possessed nearly its present power, and that of France numbered some of her most brilliant pens as contributors. In those days the press of Germany was in a very backward condition, its news of antediluvian flavour, and its commercial enterprise equal to $\bigcirc + \bigcirc = \bigcirc$

The last twenty years have wrought a great change in this as in so many other matters. Although the press is hardly, as with us, the road to fame or fortune (except in very rare cases), although few men of known literary attainments contribute to it (with rare exceptions), to-day it is an energetic exponent of public opinion, its news is almost as varied as our own, and

although without much political influence, it is carried on on broad commercial principles.

Germany does not, like England, possess one intellectual and political capital, but rather a number of such, and thus no one *exposé* of opinion could possibly command the influence or enjoy the circulation possessed by any of our great daily papers. The Berlin newspapers permeate the north of Germany, but Saxony clings with strong local feeling to those of Leipsic and Dresden. The Breslau papers are read in Silesia and Eastern Prussia, the *Cologne Gazette* circulates principally in the west, besides a large foreign circulation, and the *Frankfort Gazette* is read all over the south, which possesses only one other paper of note—the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Munich.

Thus it will be seen that there is no strong centrality in the press, as with us; for although one or two of the Berlin papers may be the most widely circulated, no single one of them (perhaps excepting the *National Gazette*) has the political or literary standing of one or two provincial papers. Also certain of these, including the *Vienna Free Press*,* have a more diffused circulation all over the country than any Berlin paper, the best of which is perhaps the *National Gazette*.

Although no German newspaper can be mentioned for commercial enterprise beside English or American leading journals, yet there are a few that have outstripped all home competitors in this respect. There are the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the *Frankfort Gazette* and

* Although in reality Austrian, this paper must be considered German in the same sense that many other things in Austria are German.

the *Vienna New Free Press*. These three are all owned by Jews, and are an indirect testimony to the commercial aptitude of that race.

German newspapers are, unlike our own, mostly taken in regularly by subscription, and taken in this way cost about as much as our own penny dailies, whilst some of them appear as often as three or four times a day, in morning, afternoon, and evening numbers, with various supplements. Bought singly, they are two to three times dearer. The system by which all German papers can be ordered, paid for, and delivered through the post-office, works admirably. As the price of the newspapers does not exceed the cost of paper and printing, their principal income, like our own, is derived from advertisements, and hence, like our own, they cannot afford to offend the interests that advertise, or take an independent line that might jeopardize their circulation. Hence, like our own, German newspapers are forced to adhere to the plain commercial principles that alone enable them to exist. To increase their circulation almost all German papers adopt the *feuilleton* with its anecdotal gossip, and many of them are forced to publish serial stories, as that has a greater power of gaining subscribers than any other literary merit or loftiness of purpose or principle.

III.

From a literary point of view, there is a great difference between German papers and our own. In that peculiar form of leader-writing, that talent for grouping of ideas which enables them to put a question superficially, but pithily and clearly, before the reader, so

cleverly that he almost loses sight of the fact of its being written from a party stand-point (and thus without impartial intellectual value), the Germans cannot compare with the English. Also, as graphic reporters of passing events, the field of the special correspondent, they cannot compare with English or American writers.

On the contrary, in the dispassionate, thorough *résumé* of a question as well as in criticism particularly on art and science, they surpass us. Passing over those sheets that seem principally to live on a continual round of political squabbling, there are some papers—notably, the Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung*—that not only reach a high standard of literary excellence,* but also combine a rare impartiality of opinion with serious breadth of treatment.

The *Allgemeine Zeitung* is one of the few German papers that has traditions. It was formerly published in Augsburg, and to its columns the poet Heine contributed his well-known Paris letters. Also it has hitherto withstood the temptation of adding to its circulation by the introduction of the *feuilleton*. In fact, we cannot but consider the *Allgemeine Zeitung* an ornament and a credit to the journalism of the country. For solidity of information on the topics it touches, it is simply unrivalled among daily papers, and reminds us in this of some of our best Reviews without their party bias. It contains more solid intellectual information, as distinct from news, than any paper we know of. Daily it brings exhaustive articles, sometimes in a series, on all sorts of topics of cosmopolitan interest,

* In this respect the Berlin *National Zeitung* also deserves to be mentioned; many of its articles are signed by the writers.

and the reader is sure to learn something on whatever subject it treats. In London it is only in the leading papers that we find now and then special articles, mostly reviews, of a similar exhaustive character. The following headings of leading articles, taken at random day by day, will enable the reader to judge of the scope of its matter: "Prussia's Agricultural Administration in the years 1884-87;" "The Inundations of Hwangho" (giving a graphic description of the inundations of this great Chinese river during the last thousand years, and its bearing on the civilization of the country); "The Constitution of Japan;" "King Louis I. of Bavaria, as the Educator of his People," &c. &c.

Many of these articles are signed, run through several numbers of the paper, and come from the pen of well-known authorities on the subjects they treat of.

That a paper of the stamp of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* must be a popular educator as well as a means of keeping its readers conversant with the current news of the day, goes without saying; and we can only express the wish that some capitalists could see their way to start a newspaper on similar lines in England.

The main typical distinction between our papers and those of Germany consists in the *feuilleton*—it includes the matter printed under the black line that runs horizontally across the middle of the paper. Although often devoted to sensational or other novels and personal anecdotes, notes on art and literature, it also includes serious criticisms of current art topics. Pictures, theatres, and above all music, are treated and

criticized in the *feuilleton*; although the value of German criticism on pictures is disputed, there can be no doubt of the invariable excellence of the average theatrical and musical articles. In fact, a regular perusal of them is almost a liberal education on these subjects.

IV.

Let us take last a point of view of journalism that journalists are fond of presenting to us before all else—the moral aspect. With regard to the publication of indecent tales and anecdotes, the German press stands far purer than the French. A paper that would publish a serial story such as “*La Terre*” of Zola, which appeared first in the *Gil Blas* (and was even confiscated in Russia), would be seized immediately and excluded henceforth from every respectable household.

In regard to the publication of obscene trials, the concise laws on the subject remove the most enterprising newspaper proprietors out of the reach of temptation. The public is excluded from such trials, and, although the press is admitted, the law ordains that no press reports of such trials are allowed, except with the consent of the Court, and after perusal of such reports by the State advocate.

There are some people left in Germany who think these officials are more likely to know what is good for public consumption, than enterprising newspaper proprietors.

The powers possessed by the Court are certainly liable to be arbitrarily used, it is true; as they go beyond the right of forbidding the publication of indecency, they apply to high treason and other matters;

these may be some of the disadvantages of paternal government, but the high character of the German bench is a sufficient guarantee against bias and undue influence; and after all, the benefit of the community being safe from sewer filth and flooding, is very great and cannot be paid for too dearly. The idea of a discretionary limit of publicity endangering the liberty of the subject nowadays is only one fit for the nursery.

There are also here and there a few Germans left who think it a doubtful testimony to a country's institutions to have to admit that its vilest abuses can only hope to be remedied, and its filth to be cleansed away, by the action of the press.

The German press has not yet, in its self-consciousness, come to regard itself as the Augean stable-cleansing Hercules of the community. The Germans look abroad, and do not feel impressed by the success of the press in that character in other countries. However dreamy and unpractical they may be in some matters, they have common sense enough to suspect an indignation the source of which doubles the circulation, for the time, of the righteous organ of public opinion.

The one moral blot on German journalism is the character of its advertisements; they are not always above suspicion, though flagrant cases of impropriety are rare. Still, in the advertisement columns of the German press, the petty spirit of hatred, spite, and slander of the Philistine airs itself. Anonymous attacks on personal character are occasionally met with such as an English jury would deal with severely. But this occurs more in places outside the main stream of

national life, in places where the press is intellectually poor, spiteful, and contemptible. There we find sheets that appeal to every local prejudice, alternately cringing and slandering, blatant with beery patriotism whilst living on envious tittle-tattle and scandal. Wherever such sheets are found, it is interesting to note the want of healthy public life, the low state of morality of the population, and the underground spread of Socialism among the working classes. Thus, if a sound press be not always an infallible mentor of public morals, a vicious newspaper is a certain indicator of popular corruption!

One tendency of the German press merits reprobation: the proclivity to comment on cases *sub judice*, in contrast to the English press, which, in this respect, is well restrained. But while on important matters restriction is advisable, needless interference is certainly irritating and impolitic. It is a question whether even Bismarck might not, in some instances, have magnanimously followed the example of Frederick the Great, who, when offensive pasquils were issued against him, would order the placards to be put lower down on the walls, that the people might read them the more easily.

We have referred to the strong personal and passionate character of the German press to-day, but we cannot conclude without a word of admiration for its tone during the war of 1870-71. It was worthy of a great nation. Its earnest tone, totally removed from bounce and bluster, in those days was as admirable as some of its excess of passion, when dealing with internal party politics to-day, is to be regretted.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

SHAKESPEARE.

I.

WE have striven to point to a few characteristics of Germany in the present day. In conclusion, we will endeavour to review our impressions and add to them. For we believe that, without being blind to its social, political, and other shortcomings, there is much in Germany to-day of the deepest interest to us.

Far be it from our thoughts that Germany is ever destined to distance the Anglo-Saxon race in the competition for the world's markets. The mass of the German people hardly possess that aggressive vitality that has made the English race the pioneers of colonization all over the world. Though they spare no pains in tapping trade, if hard work can do it, they are not the people to throw away human lives, and above all money, in order to secure remote ultimate commercial results. If this has to be done on any large scale, it will soon mark the limits of their trans-oceanic enterprise.

The present preponderant position of Germany is owing to her great men, to the organization they have effected, and to the excellent qualities of the race that have made that organization possible. But these qualities are not likely to distance the Anglo-Saxon in the long-run.

Even the great strides Germany has made in trade do not for a moment lead us to believe that it threatens

any serious injury to us.* Their temporary spurt of advantage will find its level, and will have helped to quicken our efforts to improve our methods and make the most of the many natural advantages we possess. In the meantime, it is necessary for us to see clear and derive profit from so doing. The Germans have profited enormously by studying us; it is now our turn to profit by studying them. We can do so all along the line.

In the first place, we must remember we are treating of a country which, up to within the last twenty years, was in many material respects generations behind us, and the government of which has since been carried on according to principles very much at variance with those by which we in England are guided. We have heard of a poor, police-ridden, tax-choked population, groaning under the terrible military blood-service, suffering from the evils of commercial protection, cursing the onerous conditions of its existence, and turning with longing eyes to our happy shores to admire within them the abodes of prosperity and freedom. Lastly, we hear that this nation is gagged to such an extent that it cannot even openly complain of its misery.

It is true, in Germany some limits are placed on platform oratory and "talk;" also the somewhat autocratic manner of German officials generally in their dealings with the public is not such as we should wish transplanted to our shores. But against these, and sundry other shortcomings, many striking advantages can be noticed.

* Already there are signs of its falling off, and of failure to regulate prices and encourage export by so doing. Protection does not come up to expectation, although it may not have turned out the ruin rabid Cobdenites would prophesy.

II.

We have found a nation on a high level of education, and of healthy material prosperity, and whose best sons are imbued with a rare ideality of aim and purpose. The people are animated by a sense of duty and an earnest devotion to work, which are hardly to be surpassed in the world. In this sentiment every difference of creed and party is submerged, until it forms a paramount law of ethics of universal practical application. We see this particularly in the honesty of the administration of the country as well as in the high standard of rectitude and honour observable in all the educated—notably in the professional classes. It is the moral force underlying all this that is more instructive than any outward success, which is merely its result.

We have found an absence of pauperism, of drunkenness, and other forms of degradation, as striking as they are pleasant to note.

The physical appearances of the male population when compared with that of Austria and France, shows, particularly in the North, a healthy, sturdy, manliness of bearing that is partly due to the beneficial hygienic effects of universal military service. Also the observer is met almost everywhere by outward evidences of progress and prosperity.

Berlin, that only numbered 100,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the century, and hardly half a million in '70, possesses now a population of 1,200,000 souls.

The Berlin University, only founded at the beginning of the century, to-day boasts the *élite* of intellectual Germany in its staff of professors, and attracts the

greatest number of students of any German University—over four thousand.

Whole suburbs have sprung into existence—to the west, consisting of beautiful private houses; elsewhere, factories and works have arisen, re-echoing the sound of the hammer and anvil and steam. The town that only yesterday was noted for its monotonous, lifeless streets, has now outstripped every town in Europe, except London, in the plenitude of its bustle and life.

Public buildings, such as the head post-office, the new town-hall, the different barracks, strike the eye by their vast dimensions, and the new Reichstag building when finished bids fair to become the grandest building of its kind in the world.

Nor does Berlin stand alone in the outward signs of increased prosperity. Towns, such as Frankfort-on-the-Main, Munich, Magdeburg, Breslau, Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Dresden, and many others, have wonderfully improved in appearance, as also gained in material riches. Everywhere new streets of palatial buildings have risen, and there are now dozens of towns in Germany the shop-windows of which could vie with any in England outside London.

Hamburg, the Venice of the North, has become one of the finest towns of Europe. Over £8,000,000 have been expended upon her harbour and warehouses; and her commercial activity can be gauged by the one fact, that within the last few years she has outstripped London as a coffee mart.

As for Strassburg, German rule in ten years has done more than the French did in two hundred. The new University building is alone well worth a visit to see.

Modern public buildings of every description in Germany show a grandeur and solidity of monumental architecture rarely met with elsewhere.* That the soldiers' barracks to be found in almost every large town are gigantic structures will surprise no one. In towns such as Berlin, Dresden, and Munich, they form almost separate *quartiers* of their own. But it is the cleanliness and order that particularly strike the eye. The townhalls, the post-offices particularly, and even the police-stations, and the prisons of even second-rate towns, are mostly imposing edifices and models of order and cleanliness. Even the day-schools are large buildings, uniting excellent practical accommodation with chaste architectural style.

The theatres of towns such as Dresden, Frankfort, Leipsic, Berlin, and many others, hardly need a word of encomium on the score of their elegance and solidity. Whether large or small, their construction and administration are such, that, whereas hundreds of lives have been lost by theatre fires in England, France, Italy, Austria, and even in America, during the last twenty years, no such misfortune has happened in Germany.

Those who look closer for indirect evidences of healthy national life, cannot fail to be struck with the excellent municipal organization that regulates town life. Everywhere unexceptionable order and cleanliness have replaced the old sleepy conditions of the past. Part of this is undoubtedly due to the very superior class of men from whom are chosen the mayors and town councillors of the larger German cities. Men such as von Forckenbeck, mayor of Berlin, Dr. Miguel, the mayor of Frankfort-on-the-Main, and one of the leaders of the National Liberal party, have undoubtedly done much to

raise the character of municipal administration in Germany.*

The splendid bridges over the Rhine and other rivers are notable instances of excellence of design combined with solidity of work. The railway stations, even of towns such as Hanover and Magdeburg and Strassburg, are beyond anything we have to show outside London; whilst Berlin, Munich, and Frankfort-on-the-Main each possess a station on a larger scale than our largest—the Midland, at St. Pancras. The Frankfort Station—the largest in the world—covers an area of 33,852 square yards, and is, we believe, a third larger than St. Pancras. It cost over £1,500,000, half of which was contributed by the State, and the other half by the town.

Everywhere, o'er hill and dale, are to be found fresh evidences of the vital energy pulsating through every artery of the country. Even country roads are uniformly kept in such order as contrasts strongly with the fate of some of our splendid old highways since the introduction of steam.

III.

Turning from these outward tangible evidences of national life, we find, on closer examination, that the population itself is far better-off than we were accustomed to believe. If the happiness of a people be judged by its savings, the German masses seem to stand almost as well as the English of their own class. According to statistics, there are 105 million pounds

* As an instance of the healthiness of municipal government in Germany, it may be mentioned, that the Berlin municipality closed the financial year of 1887 with a surplus of £191,000.

sterling in German savings-banks, whereas, in English savings-banks there are only 80 millions. And this does not include the numerous small investors in German Government Stock, a class (until lately, through the Post Office Savings-Bank) practically non-existent in England.

According to another series of statistics, the wealth of England is calculated as representing £249 to each inhabitant, whereas every German is only credited with £140. Now if it be borne in mind that the enormous fortunes of England are practically unknown in Germany, that in fact incomes even of a thousand a year are comparatively rare there, the above quoted average must show a high standard of income for the masses of the population.

Aristotle said, long ago, that the salvation of a country in a crisis must lie in its middle classes: in their increase lies its hope of permanence and prosperity. The tendency with us is to increase property in the hands for a few individuals, leaving an impoverished middle class, and cutting off the hope of the poorer classes ever rising into the middle class.

The problem of the moment is to prevent this accumulation of immense fortunes in few hands, and to spread the wealth throughout the country. This problem the Germans seem to be in the way of solving more satisfactorily than we are.

But, however this may be, it is certain that the number of individuals with a reserve of money saved is out of all proportion great in Germany to what it is with us. The small shopkeeper, the mechanic, and even the working man, have pleasures and enjoyments within their reach from which their English brothers are all but debarred. They participate in the same amusements as

the higher classes—such as public concerts, theatres, and operas, that are within the reach of the slenderest purse.

We are told that the German working classes suffer by protection, and it is a sad truth that wheat is 30 per cent. dearer in Germany than in England. Still, bread is hardly dearer in Germany than with us, and certainly it is far purer. It is unadulterated! One reason why Germany is better able than we are to bear the strain of a protective tariff in food stuffs may be, that small peasant proprietors form comparatively such a large body of the people.

If wages are generally lower than with us, on the other hand the people are more thrifty; they make their money go farther, particularly their wives do; and such necessities as beer and tobacco are not only cheaper than in England, but they are unadulterated. The great expansion of trade in the country during the two last decades has circulated vast sums of money among the working classes, which are far better paid than a generation ago. For instance, in Munich the wages of builders, plasterers, masons, carpenters and others, have for some time been as high as ever they were with us, although it must be confessed that this is an exception. Also the emigration of skilled labour has largely decreased of late, notwithstanding the alleged baneful results of protection to trade. The American *Nation* lately significantly noted this fact, and attributed it to the marked improvement in the laws dealing with the well-being of the German labouring classes.

How comes it then, will be asked, if so many things are satisfactory in Germany, that a party such as the Social Democrats, bent on the subversion of everything

existing, has so many followers that it has been able to send over twenty of its representatives to the Reichstag? How comes it that Germany is forced to use such repressive measures against the Socialists, that towns such as Berlin, Leipsic, Hamburg, Stettin, Frankfort, Offenbach, &c., are proclaimed in a continued modified state of siege, in order to enable the authorities to cope with them?

The main reasons why it has become so are—Firstly, because of the high and yet politically most defective education of the masses; secondly, because the introduction of universal suffrage has enabled them to make their opinions felt. (This measure has been considered a grave precipitancy on the part of Bismarck; but neither he nor anybody else could have foreseen that within ten years of attaining national unity, a million of voters would pin their faith to a party to which the idea of national existence ever seems a secondary consideration.) Thirdly, because of the very character of the masses themselves, who are less influenced by military glamour, in some senses more sober and less enthusiastically patriotic than elsewhere. Hence their care for the supremacy of their class interests is less interfered with by other considerations. This is distinctly proved by the great strides the movement has made amidst victory and commercial success. Part of the spread of Socialism must also be put down more to the gospel of hate than to that of hope; for, although some of the Socialist leaders are men of undoubted high principle and purity of motive, yet much of the envy and “Schadenfreude”—malicious joy—peculiar to Philistinism have gone to swell the number of their adherents. *We* talk of class hatred; but it is in Germany

that true class hatred exists. No uncovering before a lord among German Socialists; but stoning him, if there is a chance. Let those who doubt this recall the murders of Prince Lichnowski and General Auerswald in Frankfort-on-the-Main, in 1849. The above facts show the danger of the movement, and it finds nurture in a weak spot in the national character. Divested of all theory, it means the antagonism between capital and labour, common to all countries, but with the Germans it means more. And with the German socialists its danger lies in its sobriety and in the determination of its leaders and the rank and file.

With us the trades-unions, which had their origin in the unspeakable social misery of the working classes, have acted as valves carrying off superfluous steam. Such have been prevented in Germany, and as life is of a less depressing character to the working man, secret combinations of this kind have been less resorted to. Socialism has more of an abstract or philosophic basis, than the narrower aims of our trades-unions. As a high Prussian legal authority put it to us a little time ago, we educate the masses to look upon the will of the majority as law. What can we say, when the time comes for them to turn round, and, using our own arguments, to aver that they being in a majority their will is law? This is the problem the statesmen of the future will have to face. Not the dearth or plenty of wages will influence its course. We find the Knights of Labour in America, where wages are high and employment plentiful. It is part and parcel of the increased fierceness of the struggle for existence of our time.

Whereas in Austria active brains have still an easy

victory over laziness and stupidity, in Germany—particularly in the North—intelligence is already grappling with intelligence in the fierce struggle for existence, and breeds Socialism in all the great centres of commerce and manufacture.

As it fell to the French in the last century to deal with feudal aristocracy, so it will probably fall to the lot of Germany to grapple with the problem of this century first. Not because the conditions of its labouring classes are the most onerous—far from it; but for the reasons given above, which place them in the front rank in clamouring for recognition.

The late Emperor William, in his message of February 1881, to the working classes, has recognized their right to be considered by the State, and the subsequent laws in favour of insurance in case of sickness, in case of accident, and, lastly, for provision for old age, have since emphasized his words. How far these measures will answer, the future alone can show. Those who prophesy a black future for the country from Socialism, may be right, but they would be strangely short-sighted if they surmised that these social problems will only have to be solved in Germany. They will come to the fore in all other countries, and it is very questionable whether they will find other countries more prepared to meet the shock. For in Germany there exists a counterweight in the fact of the land being largely in possession of the people, which will tell its tale in favour of compromise; whereas those countries will feel the inevitable upheaval of the masses most in which the people are most dissatisfied with the social and economical conditions of their existence.

If democracy comes to rule, some of the meaner instincts of the race will come into dangerous prominence. Envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness will find fuller scope than ever. The words of the wise will be unheeded amidst the angry passions of the hour; for before its advent—if inevitable—it is most unlikely that the leading minds will be able to cast the institutions of the country in an iron frame, capable of resisting each fresh assault upon it, as the Constitution of America has proved itself able to do.

The French still possess the qualities that made them ever a united people against the foreigner; the English have only to be hard pressed to verify the eulogies some of the best and most genial Germans have passed on them as a nation; but we firmly believe the Germans have only to lose the initiative of Prussia to verify again the truths that have been stated in the past respecting their political character as a nation, and sink back into the gelatinous mass they rose from.

IV.

The short reign of Frederick III. and its sequels have thrown a lurid light on the bitter party divisions of the country. Of the Socialists we have spoken, though they are little understood with us. You must have been in the country to understand. The ultra-Liberals are only in a degree less opposed to every measure on which authority rests in Prussia. The Roman Catholics have proved that they recognize an allegiance beyond the Alps, above the loyalty to the Sovereign—yes, even perhaps above national interests. The Conservatives, although possessing many lofty cha-

racters in their ranks, are as a party too selfish, narrow-minded, and slow ever to be able to wield decisive Parliamentary influence. The intellectual backbone of the country is perhaps to be found in the National-Liberal party, though, in its turn, it is anything but a homogeneous body. As favouritism, jobbery, and the influence of wealth have affected the efficiency of our Whigs and Tories, so impractical doctrinairism is the plague-spot of the National-Liberal and Liberal parties. The conscientious politician-professor is the bugbear of German politics, and his enthusiastic admiration of English institutions, not the least suspicious element of his creed; it is invariably derived from book-knowledge, or from a very short stay in England.

These irreconcilable parties and the very character of the German people, of which they are typical, do not hold out a guarantee that Parliamentaryism, particularly that of a single all-powerful Chamber, is suited to the character or requirements of the nation. On the contrary, it is the seed-ground of peril for the future. In its bosom are the future allies of the Socialists—the Catholics. The danger that lies in a possible social propaganda of the Catholics can be surmised when we look at Ireland. It is a Democratic, almost Socialistic, movement.

The Catholic Congress at Freiburg in Sept. '88 distinctly pointed in the direction of Catholic participation in projects of social reform—the care for the masses. It is only necessary to bear in mind the power of the Catholic party in the country and in the Reichstag to feel that, once it joins hands with the Democratic faction, it will be a hot time for the moderate Liberals

representing the resisting bulk of the middle classes. On these lines there is undoubtedly a powerful opening for the Catholic party.

For, if it strong in itself, it is even stronger by the hopeless divisions of its political opponents. A party that presents a united parliamentary phalanx literally, in the words of Lord Tennyson, stands—

“Four square to every wind that blows”—

even when the object of its policy is almost anti-national; it may well bid its enemies beware, if once its policy should be such as to attract the sympathies of large classes of the population.

In view of this state of things, it is fortunate that a strong central authority is a living reality, at least for the present. It is a healthy point in legal ethics, that offences can be punished in proportion to the harm they might inflict on the community, and not by sentimental standards. *Res publica suprema lex*, still holds good, whether for a rebellious diplomatist or a restless professor. It is necessary to bear this in mind in a time that has come to find excuses and defenders for almost any action, however pernicious. When Germany is more consolidated, she can perhaps allow herself the luxury of sentiment in politics, but that time has not come.

The recent endeavour to lessen the services of Bismarck, by seeking to increase the credit of others, has, like previous attempts, signally failed. Surely his reputation has no need of borrowed plumes. But public opinion, as usual, like the peasant who wanted to look inside the fowl that laid the golden egg, has always wanted to know exactly whence everything originated. It can never be believed that the late Emperor Fre-

derick wished the world should know, by his Diary, that he had been far more in the work of unity than had hitherto been acknowledged. This would be in too striking contrast with the conduct of his great father.

People already ask themselves what will become of the country and these elements of discord when Bismarck passes away. Why has he trained no successors? But surely neither Pitt, Canning, nor Wellington left any successors either. The State is like a ship that has been guided through shoals, Bismarck at least leaves it with a model working system. If he has somewhat lavishly used up the administrative capacity of the country, in one particular, the working material of the nation stands untarnished, supreme—the army. Amidst all the bitterness of political discussion, its chief, Field-Marshal von Moltke, passes like a classic shadow of antiquity from the scene of activity, after himself appointing his successor. Thus around the army all those who are intent on retaining the means of developing everything that is to be valued in a nation must group themselves. The time may come when all this may be sufficiently safeguarded by the free expression of public opinion, but that time has not yet come.

In the meantime the temper of the nation makes it very unlikely it will embark in Quixotic adventures, such as the French, by their constitutional periodical "*déborde-ments de sang*," have indulged in and suffered from.

V.

Our attention to what is going on in Germany has increased so much of late, that it must interest us to glance at the feelings of Germany in general towards

England and the English. Now, although everything English has ever been looked up to in Germany, and the more so by the higher intellectual men who have studied us, of late there has grown a distinctive political dislike for us. It began in our attitude towards Germany before the '64 Danish war: it has increased since, through a variety of causes. Perhaps the greatest of these is to be sought in the fact that the two nations are passing through such different cycles of public feeling and development as almost to preclude a mutual understanding. We have been lately suffering from some of the disadvantages of our political system, whereas the Germans have only just reaped the advantages of their own; even their recent progress can but be looked upon as exceptional; bearing the part in mind, the drawbacks remain to be seen.

The Germans have only just fought for their national existence, and are still in that primitive frame of mind that calls a spade a spade, whereas we have long arrived at that stage of culture, that often makes us loth to look significant facts and their consequences in the face. This difference of circumstance and feeling must increase the difficulty of understanding each other's aims; but it need not lessen mutual respect, no more than it need prevent our profiting by any lessons the study of the country must convey. Besides the points already referred to, we may learn from it that the possibilities of a great race are not unfailingly indicated by its rush towards democracy and by its yearly balance of profit and loss, but also by the great men it produces.

In every case the days are past when worn-out methods, blundering incapacity, or defective organization

can be atoned for by the self-sacrifice of an heroic race. The battle of life with nations, as with individuals, has become more and more severe and fierce. The fanaticism of blind patriotism or belief can no longer be reckoned on as adequate to right a ship unskilfully steered in dangerous shoals. Everything points to the serious, even irretrievable, results of want of preparation of a nation to meet the responsibilities of its position.

From a study of the German model administration we may learn not to ask whether our navy or army be rotten, but who are the men we ought to hang for such being the case. The higher the position the greater the crime and its punishment.

A study of the points Bismarck has scored off us in foreign policy ought to enable us to learn how to meet German statesmen on their own ground, when our legitimate interests are trenched upon, and open our eyes to the fact that our present party government renders it difficult for us to do so.

Perhaps the most useful lesson the study of Germany teaches us to-day is, that *laissez faire* as a system of social and political advancement—between an aristocracy of the past and a democracy of the future playing at cross purposes—is no longer the only shibboleth to swear by. A few additional watchwords can hardly fail to be suggested by an impartial study of Germany of to-day.

THE END.





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